The dynamics of identity amongst Japanese migrants in Dublin

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Declaration

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Abstract

In post-war Japan, family, education, and *seken* have helped construct normative ideals of people's social roles in society and shaped the principle values for a middle-class life course. However, many Japanese youth both desire and resist an 'ideal' middle-class life. This is evident in the growing phenomenon of youth mobility. Whilst youth mobility is predominantly discussed in relation to student mobility, in recent times, it has also been driven by the movement of young individuals who are seeking self-realisation. A sense of alienation and purposelessness amongst many Japanese youth, arising from the socially conservative expectations of their social roles, is fuelling a desire for a freer, and ultimately, better quality of life.

Such a desire for self-realisation amongst Japanese youth has precipitated migratory flows to a perceived cosmopolitan West. The journey, albeit temporary, offers the prospect of capital accumulation, remaking the self and fashioning new identities. Yet, given that the seeking of self-fulfilment is typically discussed in terms of the pursuit of personal desires beyond social roles, migration is considered to be a problematic practice by much of Japanese society. In this context, those involved in these new mobilities face a dilemma between the pursuit of self-realisation and the pressures to adhere to idealised social expectations. In this thesis, I examine how Japanese youths negotiate the migration experience and remake their identities in a Western context.

In an ethnographic exploration of the journeys and lives of Japanese people who lived

in Dublin on a range of temporary visas, I explore the ways in which they navigated their personal desires and the multiple, sometimes conflicting, discourses in cultivating new identities. The manifold social realities that Japanese youth enact in Dublin reveals the diverse ways they reconstructed their identities, and ultimately, also provides a glimpse into wider trends in contemporary Japanese migration.

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Technical Notes

This thesis adopts the modified Hepburn system of romanisation to write English translations of Japanese words. Long vowels of Japanese words are indicated with macrons, except when words have entered common usage in the English vocabulary. For instance, the capital city of Japan is written as Tokyo instead of Tōkyō.

The names of the people appearing in this thesis are anonymised in order to protect their privacy and minimise the risk of being identified, unless people consented to the use of their real names.

Double quotation marks are used to cite from texts and interviews, while on the other hand, single quotation marks are used to set off words and phrases, as well as to refer to quotations within a quotation.

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Chapter One: Introduction

At dawn on the 18th of October in 2010, I made my way to the Dublin office of the Garda National Immigration Bureau (GNIB) facing the River Liffey. Seeing hundreds of people forming a long queue around the office, I stood at the end of the line and after a little while managed to secure a day ticket to register with the Garda. As with any other non- E.E.A. national, Japanese citizens planning on staying in Ireland over three months were required to obtain an immigration certificate of registration, known as a GNIB card, within 30 days of entry into Ireland. In the late afternoon, I returned to the office and waited my turn while conversing with a Malaysian medical student next to me who, speaking from her experience the previous year, was complaining about the vexatiousness of bureaucratic inertia. The lobby of the office was packed with people like myself who had to obtain or renew a GNIB card. After nearly 12 hours of waiting, finally it was my turn. "Ayako Suzuki, Japanese national!" An officer called out my name. I walked towards him, drawing stares from other applicants patiently waiting in the lobby. Seemingly this was the fanfare that marked the experience of being officially a migrant in Ireland, for the officer then gave a toothy, plastic smile and said, again loudly: "Congratulations!" as he gave me my passport and a newly issued GNIB card. This designation of non-E.E.A. people as migrants was experienced by all of the Japanese people with whom I worked in Ireland. The legal status of migrant which was inscribed in their GNIB card presumably designated a particular positionality in Irish society. However, the migrant experience is, of course, never monolithic.

The latest statistics reveal the highest number of Japanese nationals living overseas since government statistics began in 1968. As of October 2014, 1,290,175 Japanese live abroad as *eijyūsha* – permanent residents – or as *chōki taizaisha* – long-term residents who stay in their chosen destination for more than three months. The latter constitute about 66 per cent of the total number (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan 2015). Advanced technology and their economic privilege have enabled the Japanese to easily travel overseas so that living abroad, regardless of the duration of the stay, has become a common trend. This raises the question. What is their migration experience? Why do Japanese people travel overseas and how do they live in a new social environment? This thesis looks at a particular category of overseas Japanese – namely those living as students, on working holiday and employment visas in Dublin, the capital city of the Republic of Ireland. Common amongst these people is that they relocated to Dublin on their own initiative with temporary visas. What are the migration experiences of these people in their twenties and thirties who had voluntarily and individually travelled to Dublin with the intention of staying temporarily.

Dublin as a multicultural city

In order to understand what the migrant experience in Dublin might be, it is essential to first outline the context of migration to Ireland and how it may influence the lives of the Japanese people in my research. Today, the Republic of Ireland (hereafter Ireland) is a rapidly changing nation-state where nearly 600,000 non-Irish nationals reside (Central Statistics Office Ireland 2011). Historically, Ireland has been considered to encompass a unique set of social, political and demographic factors relative to the United Kingdom,

and much scholarly attention has been paid to the political and ethno-religious boundaries that divide the island in two (Murphy 1988). Whereas the six counties in the North remain an integral part of the United Kingdom, the people in the South form the relatively coherent ethno-religious nation-state that became the Republic of Ireland in 1921.[1] This inherent pluralism relating to the problem of two mutually distrustful communities of unequal size and power in Northern Ireland has now been replaced by the 'new' agenda of pluralism in the face of the arrival of migrants in the North (Finlay 2004: 1). And this agenda is also true for Ireland. Reflecting this, contemporary debate in Ireland has reoriented itself from focusing on the narratives of their own history as migrants settled across the world to the domestic social changes that have resulted in Ireland on becoming a state of net inward migration since the 1990s (Crowley *et al.* 2006). Namely, this demographic upheaval was accompanied by a massive wave of returnees to Ireland which was facilitated by "the effect of the baby boom of the 1960s" (Mac Éinrí 2000: 3). In addition to this, Ireland's admission to the E.E.C. (now the E.U.) in 1973 and its economic prosperity from the mid-1990s to the mid-2000s, which earned it the title of Celtic Tiger, was fundamentally underpinned by the return of Irish high-skilled workers. Celtic Tiger was of great influence in inviting a new demographic of people from the E.U., Africa, as well as South and East Asia to engage in economic activities (ibid.: 5; Crowley *et al.* 2006). It was during the Celtic Tiger era that the Irish economy tapped into foreign labour in its growth (Fanning 2012). As a result, Irish society has changed from being a society of generating migrants to a centre of receiving

[1] Celticism as it was elaborated after independence fundamentally framed a monocultural Irish view. The people in Northern Ireland are often depicted simply as the bearers of particular ethnic or national identities that are conventionally designated as unionist/Protestant versus nationalist/Catholic. The most significant ideological contests that define the Northern Ireland problem are the sectarian violence since 1969 between two major ethno-religious groups, and widespread political unrest has shaped the image of the region (Finlay 2004).

migrants of nationals from over 190 countries (Onyejelem 2005: 71). This non-Irish population was estimated at approximately 13 per cent of the total population of 4,525,281 in the 2011 census (Central Statistics Office Ireland 2011). This ethnic population upsurge is extraordinarily high, compared to that of 1 per cent in the 1992 survey. Such a dramatic change in its demography is a situation without parallel in other E.U. nations (Lentin 2002: 235).[2] The multiculturalism that has emerged in response to a globalising city accommodating diverse ethnic populations has helped create a multi-ethnic state (Mac Éinrí 2004: 101).

Yet, this rapid shift in the population created by the inward flow of refugees, asylum seekers, a non-Irish population born in Ireland and migrants, adding to the already existing Jewish and Traveller ethnic communities, has not been accepted wholeheartedly by the local Irish. Whilst multiculturalism and inward migration have never been new to Ireland (Lentin 2002: 230), recent dynamic changes in the population and in its accompanying social environment have been treated as "a negative development" by many (Onyejlem 2005: 71). The presence of ethnic groups has provoked a backlash, often resulting in individual and collective forms of racism.[3] An

[2] It was only in 2002 that the question of nationality first appeared in the Census (Tyrrell *et al*. 2011: xi). In the following 2006 census, the question of ethnic grouping was further incorporated (Central Statistics Office Ireland). These developments are an illustration of a rapidly globalising society accommodating diverse ethnic populations (King-O'Riain 2007). The Employment Equality Act of 1998 and the following Equal Status Act of 2000 were implemented to prohibit discrimination in employment, accommodation or education, monitored by the Irish government bodies of the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism (NCCRI) in 1998 and The Equality Authority established in 1999 (Cwonley *et al.* 2006: 18). Similarly, policies such as Immigration Act in 1999, Integration: A Two-Way Process by Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform 1999, as well as a three-year plan called 'the National Action Plan Against Racism in 2005, were launched to respond to racism and interculturism (Mac Éinrí 2004: 101).

[3] Collective protests related to accommodation issues in Dublin against Travellers, asylum seekers or migrants have drawn scholarly concern. Special areas assigned to asylum seekers within the city of Dublin is one such thing (White 2002). For instance, the presence of asylum seekers is often

increase in intolerance towards ethnic groups, therefore, is not only indicative of the dilemmas of a rapidly changing city but also creates a 'defensive ethnocentrism' amongst the locals (Mac Gréil 1996).[4] In addition, the public concern about internal diversity is reflected in a change in the definition of Irish citizenship. A referendum held in 2004 abolished the automatic granting of citizenship to anyone born on the island of Ireland (*jus soli*) and resulted in the amendment of Article 2 of the Irish Constitution that defines territorial birthright citizenship with a residence requirement or on the basis of blood (*jus sanguinis*). The added restrictions to the *jus soli* system with more emphasis on the *jus sanguinis* principles parallel nationality laws in other Western European countries (Honohan 2012; Mancini and Finlay 2008). This was considered to be a rational way to control legal entitlements to asylum seekers, who were not entitled to work as well as to regulate the inflow of labour migrants. Fanning (2012: 168-169) notes that it was during this referendum campaign that migrants came to be referred to as 'non-nationals' in the media and by politicians, and that the national/non-national concept became elaborated. Public discourses about in-migration that had been predominantly directed at asylum seekers and refugees began to ripple across a wide range of ethnic groups. Limited access to citizenship resulted in fixing the ideas of an Irishness that was essentially defined by ancestral ties and a shared cultural heritage (Cwonley *et al.* 2006: Honohan 2012).

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viewed as "problematic" in that it has negative impacts on tourism, the economy or job opportunities for locals (Peillon 2002: 195). Yet, Peillon suggests that such collective actions should be analysed as a response to social, political and economic relations rather than a collective prosecution of powerless people (ibid.: 202).

[4] Various scholars explain the dissonance between ethnic groups in various ways; it is due to the government's top-down policy in the absence of democratic consultation (Lentin 2002: 242): the scarcity of grassroots cross-cultural contacts between the host and ethnic communities (Onyejlem 2005: 71): or, the governmental denial of the existence of racism as well as the media misrepresentations of ethnic minorities particularly of asylum seekers that accelerate the xenophobia (ibid.: 74-75).

It is important to stress that although this thesis is not about Irishness nor about Ireland failing to acknowledge its ethnic diversity, it is important to understand that the notion of Irishness, which was shaped primarily in opposition to British colonial power (Kiberd 2002), has become increasingly interrelated with these new migrants. As Crowley *et al.* (2006) point out, this is paradoxical in light of the fact that the Irish were frequently victims of racism in the places to which they migrated. Indeed, the notion of Irishness is itself contested. Given its blend of Anglo-Irish, Gaelic, Norman and Viking cultures, Irish society has, as Lentin (2002: 230) stresses, never been homogenous but has historically always had multi-ethnic features. Also, it can be argued that the concept of Irishness that has been configured through the migrant narratives of the Irish across the world itself is a result of racialisation (King-O'Riain 2007: 519). In this regard, as Titley (2004) poignantly argues, the discourse of multiculturalism principally encompasses a set of competing ideological visions from each ethnic group; by problematising the presence of foreignness, 'difference' and cultural diversity are advocated in the name of multiculturalism. Hence, the juxtaposition of racialised ethnic populations in Dublin inevitably involves "a degree of disavowal" (Lentin 2002: 230), reproducing the idea of a dominant and homogeneous 'White Irish' (ibid.: 231; Titley 2004). This vision inevitably involves ideas about not only "putative national cultures" but also of an essentialised "singular culture" (Titley 2004: 17). From this perspective, multiculturalism fundamentally entails narratives of exclusion (ibid.: 11).

Having said that, I want to highlight that not all ethnic groups are seen as problematic. As Garner (2013: 186) claims, migration per se is not an issue, but rather various issues

surrounding migration as linked to particular ethnic minorities are perceived as problematic. Indeed, the 2011 census reports that E.U. nationals constitute about 71 per cent of the population of non-Irish nationals, whose number is significantly high in comparison to, for instance, 12 per cent of Asian nationals (Central Statistics Office 2011). The rights of residence, employment, social welfare benefits and political participation are becoming a concern for ethnic minorities who do not come from the E.U.. As I noted at the outset of this chapter, there were legal procedures that my participants had to undergo upon their arrival in Ireland in order to remain. A non-E.U. national who wishes to stay in Ireland beyond the date granted by the immigration officer (typically three months) is required to report to GNIB and obtain permission to stay in Ireland. People wanting to remain in Ireland are classified into five main categories. For instance, Stamp 1 is issued to people on work permits or working holiday makers;[5] students registered on a full-time course quality for Stamp 2;[6] Stamp 4 is permission to work without a work permit. It is granted to those on Working Visas or Work Authorisation or who are the spouse of an Irish/E.U. national. High-skilled workers such as intra-company transferees qualify for this category; Stamp 3 is applicable to the spouse of an employment permit holder (Stamp 4) and thereby those on Stamp 3 are not entitled to engage in any economic activity (Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service n.d.). Despite the various types of categories migrants fall into, only a limited category of migrants are able to take up long-term residency in Ireland.

[5] Working holiday makers denote youths aged between 18 and 30 who have obtained a working holiday visa in order to holiday, work and study in a country that concluded a bilateral agreement with Japan (Japan Association for Working Holiday Makers n.d.).

[6] Unlike E.E.A nationals, non-E.E.A. students are permitted to engage in casual employment up to 40 hours per week during holidays and 20 hours per week outside of them (Irish Council for International Students).

As for students, with the recognition that student migration, for language students in particular, has been exploited as a means to stay and work in Ireland, the state's concern with the ramifications for the labour market resulted in the reform of student immigration regulations (Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service 2009). The New Immigration Regime for Full Time Non-E.U. Students in 2011 defines a maximum of three years of stay in Ireland for non-degree students enrolling in full-time programmes. Although it is possible for them to extend their stay only by proceeding to degree courses in higher education and by seeking employment afterwards, the chance of getting a work visa is slim because work authorisation and work permits are predominantly targeted at citizens from white, Christian countries in order to control ethnic and religious diversity in the country (Cwonley and Gilmartin 2006: 16). Those on temporary visas are therefore essentially not seen as an integral part of Irish society.

In regard to the designation of 'Otherness' in the Irish context, much of the discourse of multiculturalism is reduced to a black-white social dichotomy wherein blackness as represented by asylum seekers and those with African ethnic backgrounds have become main representatives of Otherness (Crowley *et al.* 2006; Yau 2007). In this context people other than non-Whites/Blacks are automatically placed in a subordinate position as invisible Others (Yau 2007: 57); this applies well to the Asian populations who are a relatively new type of Other in Ireland. In view of the fact that Ireland-Asia relations have been chiefly framed in terms of their colonial relationships with the British Empire (Harrington 2014), East Asia is often lumped together with South Asia. Whilst ethnic designation is ambiguous, the perception of Asia typically refers to South Asia or

China.[7]

In the context where Chinese and South Asian have become the dominant representations of Asian Others, the discussions of East Asian populations in the Irish context are primarily framed within economic terms. King-O'Riain (2011), for instance, reports that the Chinese in Ireland are positively recognised by the local media as 'the model minority' for their economic potential. She argues that the positive response to Chinese people in Ireland, which is markedly different from other global locations, is based on the depiction that the Chinese are "good short term" workers, who make an economic contribution to Irish society while simultaneously having legal restrictions that hinder their permanent settlement (2011: 206). However, the Chinese presence is not new to Irish society. From in the 1950s, due to the colonial relationship between the U.K. and Hong Kong, many ethnic Chinese originating from Hong Kong travelled though the U.K. en route Ireland (Yau 2007: 49). In spite of the substantial history of the Chinese presence as well as the growth in the South and East Asian populations and the doubling of the Japanese population over the last decade,[8] the failure to recognise

[7] One such example is found in the category of ethnic group in the national census. Reflecting the recent upsurge in the number of migrants travelling to Ireland, the question regarding ethnicity first appeared in 2006. The classification of 'Asian or Asian Irish' populations is divided into two subordinate categories: one is 'Chinese' and the other is 'any other Asian background' within which those of South Asian background are placed (Central Statistics Office).

[8] According to the national census conducted in 2002, 2006 and 2011, there has been a drastic increase in the number of Asian residents from 21,779 in 2002, 52,345 in 2006 to 84,700 in 2011 (Central Statistics Office Ireland), of which Chinese people constituted approximately 27 per cent (17,832) of the Asian populations in the 2011 census. However, the actual number of Chinese appears to be larger than these numbers. Wang and King-O'Riain (2006: 18) state that the actual population of Chinese was estimated at between 60,000 and 100,000 in 2006, which formed the second largest ethnic community after the Polish in Ireland. Migration to Ireland by Chinese students began in 1998 and accelerated under the regulations of 2000 that permitted work for all non-E.E.A. students (ibid.: 4).

ethnic diversity as well as the narrowly-articulated idea of Irishness are powerfully experienced by the second generation of migrants (White 2002; Yau 2007).[9] It is within this context of multiculturalism in Ireland that Japanese people are seen primarily as outsiders. This also stems from the fact that Japanese migration to Ireland has a relatively short history and that the majority of Japanese are a transient population to the country. So, which groups of Japanese reside in Ireland?

Japanese people in Ireland

The outflows of Japanese people have predominantly been characterised as Western-bound in the post-war periods. According to the latest government statistics, North America (37%) with the most number of Japanese since 1985, Asia (29%) and Western Europe (16%) are the major three regions of permanent settlement and temporary residence amongst Japanese overseas, constituting 80 per cent of its total number (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan 2016). Other than the decreasing number of Japanese in South America and a growing trend of Japanese moving towards Asia, as of 2016, the proportion of Japanese in Western Europe has remained similar over the last 25 years (ibid.). In the European context, Japan's economic expansion particularly since the 1980s brought about a rapid growth in the Japanese populations in such global centres as the U.K., Germany[10] and France. In particular, the U.K., which has the

[9] White (2002) uses the example of migrants' identity in the Irish context to discuss the absence of a utopian model of a multi-ethnic landscape. White reveals the ongoing social discrimination against Nigerian migrants in terms of housing, banking or employment, meaning that Nigerian migrants fail to internalise their hyphenated identities as "Irish-African" (2002: 253).

[10] In place of Berlin and Hamburg, Düsseldorf has grown to become the second most significant Japanese trade centre after London during the post-war period (Glebe 2003: 100).

largest number of Japanese amongst all European countries, exceeding 65,000 people in the 2013 census, has been identified as economically and culturally significant in Japan itself (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan 2013; Martin 2007: 3-4; White 2003: 79). Since the early 1990s, alongside the growth in the number of people travelling to the U.K. for educational purposes, the company-led migration model has shifted to one of (semi-) permanent expatriates, resulting in the normalisation of the Japanese presence in London (White 2003: 96). Whilst the transnational streams of Japanese channelled into global cities like London have come to form a Japanese ethnoscape,[11] the Japanese presence in Ireland has been of little significance to contemporary Irish multiculturalism.

With regard to the inflow of Japanese individuals to Ireland, anecdotal evidence would indicate that an initial stream of Japanese arriving in the early 1970s reached Ireland via England. Given the fact that there are no direct flights between Japan and Ireland, this pattern remains the same. Nevertheless, the flows of the Japanese to Ireland have slowly increased since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1957. Japan-Ireland relations were initiated by both countries' economic development in parallel with the aforementioned European cities. Breathnach's (1989) study on Japanese foreign manufacturing investment precipitated by the Japanese government's economic policy beginning in the late 1960s, demonstrates that when Ireland joined the E.U. in 1973, it enhanced the attractiveness of the country as a desirable location for foreign firms seeking to penetrate European markets by basing their plants there. He reports that due

[11] Appadurai (1990: 191) conceptualises 'ethnoscape' as that which basically combines migrants into a "spatially bounded, historically unselfconscious, or culturally homogeneous" imagined unity.

to various incentives that Ireland offered, such as "export profits tax relief, generous capital and training grants, a well-educated and highly-motivated workers at relatively low cost," Ireland became an attractive place to do business (1989: 28). In addition, Ireland was an English-speaking environment and given its neutrality during the Second World War these factors were considered to provide substantial advantages in order to bolster economic ties between the two countries (ibid.). As a result, Japanese foreign manufacturing investment saw the development in the synthetic textiles and electronics sectors in the Dublin area including the Asahi synthetic fibre plant – the largest single investment by a Japanese corporation in Europe – and the Nippon Electric Company (NEC) in 1975.[12] In 2011, about 80 Japanese corporations had Irish-based plants, 80 per cent of which were based in the Dublin area (The Japan External Trade Organization 2011). Japan has maintained a favourable economic relationship with Ireland chiefly in the pharmaceutical, finance and electronics manufacturing industries. Given that Ireland ranks 12th as an export partner country among 28 E.U. countries in 2013 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs n.d.), it is conceivable that economic ties with Ireland have resulted in a number of Japanese company employees and their families coming to Ireland. However, considering that fact that I came across only one Japanese business person working for a Japanese corporation as a transferee during my fieldwork, it is reasonable to assume that they have created a closed community.

[12] Breathnach also reports that although Ireland's share of Japanese manufacturing investment within the E.U. was as high as 18 per cent, coming second to the U.K.'s 19 per cent in 1980, Japanese investment in Ireland had an insignificant share of total manufacturing investment. In the 1985 statistics, Japanese investment in Ireland accounted for a mere 1.35 per cent of all foreign firms based in Ireland, 2 per cent of employment in foreign firms and 4.3 per cent of capital investment by foreign firms (Breathnach 1989: 30).

The overall number of Japanese in Ireland has doubled in the last decade. The latest 2014 statistics enumerate 1,767 Japanese people residing in the Republic of Ireland, making it 36th amongst foreign countries and 11th amongst Western European countries with Japanese nationals (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan 2015). In Japanese government statistics Japanese overseas are classified into two categories: *eijyūsha* (永住者) – those who are permitted permanent residence in a destination country – and *chōki taizaisha* (長期滞在者) – those who stay in a country of destination for longer than three months, yet anticipate returning to Japan. By this definition of temporariness that lies in whether or not one possesses the right of permanent residence in the destination, although *chōki taizaisha* literally reads as 'long-term stayers,' the stay of *chōki taizaisha* is temporary in nature. For this reason, I call *chōki taizaisha* 'temporary migrants' in this thesis. Of 1767 Japanese residents in the foregoing statistics, 601 people are *eijyūsha* and 1,166 are *chōki taizaisha*. It follows that temporary-based residents account for two-thirds of the figures registered with the Japanese embassy. The same statistics show that roughly one-third of the number of *chōki taizaisha* in Ireland are business people who are temporarily transferred to the Irish branch of their Japanese corporations with their families (those on Stamps 3 and 4) as well as local employees (Stamp 1), another third are those engaged in schooling, i.e., students, teachers and researchers, and the rest are 'others,' where working holiday makers are also identified. It is conceivable that about two-thirds of *chōki taizaisha* are considered as being engaged in education in Ireland and living on working holiday visas. With regard to the stream of Japanese people moving to Ireland, the recent Japanese populations in Ireland, particularly of *chōki taizaisha*, is characterised by the presence of youths who come as degree-students, language students and working-holiday makers.

The significance of the role that international students play as an important source of revenue for universities (King-O'Riain 2011: 211) elsewhere is also true of Japanese youths travelling to Ireland. In particular, the working holiday scheme has attracted a steady stream of Japanese youth coming to Ireland, who are most likely to attend English language schools for varying periods of time.

The regulations of the 'Working-holiday visa' were first developed in coordination with Australia in 1980, followed by New Zealand, Canada, South Korea and France in the 1990s. The working holiday visa agreement with Ireland went into effect in 2007 as part of the marking of the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and Ireland. The working holiday scheme thus far applies to 14 countries and regions which are concentrated in Oceania, North America and Europe, and also includes three Asian countries and regions – South Korea, Taiwan and Hong Kong (Japan Association for Working Holiday Makers n.d.). Irish working holiday visa is a single-entry visa that permits visa holders to stay in the country for up to 12 months. For Japanese youths aged between 18 and 30,[13] the working holiday scheme has become one of the more convenient choices for going to Ireland, reflected in a steady increase in its number from 165 in 2010 to 248 in 2013 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan n.d.). This is due to the fact that it grants permission to work full-time up to 39 hours per week, whereas student visas have more rigid requirements in terms of work hours and school attendance. In a conversation that I had with a Japanese embassy staff member in Ireland, he referred to the low level of popularity of Ireland as a working holiday

[13] The age limit for an Irish working-holiday visa was raised from 25 to 30 years of age in June 2015 (Japan Association for Working Holiday Makers n.d.). At the time of my fieldwork, there was an exceptional case where one female participant successfully obtained a working-holiday visa when she was 33 at the time of application.

destination, which is reflected in the fact that the working holiday scheme in Ireland has never reached its capacity of 400. Nevertheless, the fact that the increasing numbers of working holiday makers travelling to Ireland comprise as much as one-fifth of the population of *chōki taizaisha* is worth investigating. This in part shows that the transient global movement of young Japanese as working holiday makers and language students has become a common trend. Yet, the lived experiences of such mobile youths abroad remain an area subject to little scholarly inquiry.

For those who come to Ireland temporarily, Ireland is not seen as a place of ample business opportunities that will lead them to a long-term stay with a work permit. There was only one Japanese female to the best of my knowledge who succeeded in obtaining a work permit at the time of my fieldwork. With the limited choice of jobs available for those seeking part-time employment, the common option was to work in the service sectors such as Japanese restaurants, Irish pubs, supermarkets, cafés and hostels. Indeed, only those who reside in the state on work visas (those who obtain Stamp 1 or 4) are entitled to apply for long-term residency that endorses a five-year-extension. In short, there is little prospect of shifting from temporary to long-term residency. Nor is there obvious benefit for those seeking economic opportunities in moving to Ireland**.** Moreover, taking into account the reality that the temporal presence of Japanese is also integrated into the politics of differentiation, which may influence their Irish experiences in a negative way, it is a further difficulty to understand why Japanese youths decide to travel to Ireland. So, what can we learn about migration from the lives of Japanese young adults who journeyed to Dublin? What issues might arise when looking at the lives of temporary migrants such as my Japanese participants in Dublin?

The significance of looking at this particular population lies precisely in its unique position, as part of the phenomenon of youth migration. The majority of Japanese youths is predominantly Western- or Asia-bound. For students enrolled in tertiary education abroad, the U.S.A. has been by far the most popular destination for Japanese students, constituting 56.4 per cent in 2013 (OECD 2015). Whilst various statistics demonstrate differing data, the outflow of Japanese students is predominantly distributed across North America, Western Europe, Oceania and East Asia. For instance, a 2013 government report shows that China, Taiwan, the U.K. and Australia were the second, third, fourth and fifth destination of overseas study respectively after the U.S.A. (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports and Science & Technology in Japan 2016).[14] Also, a report published in 2014 demonstrates that Canada, Australia, the U.K. and South Korea followed the U.S.A. as an educational destination (Japan Student Services Organization 2014).[15] Along similar lines, nearly half of the total numbers of working holiday makers embark on their journeys to Australia every year. In 2013, 10,455 working holiday makers travelled to Australia, 6,500 to Canada, 2,146 New Zealand and 1,000 to the U.K. (Global Action for Careers and Employability n.d.). Against this background, English-speaking counties and the neighbouring countries of Japan have evidently been the major educational and travel destinations, yet the mobility of Japanese youths, of course, is not exclusive to these listed countries. Government

[14] This government data is based on OECD's annual Education at a Glance, UNESCO Institute for Statistics, Institute of International Education's Open Doors, the Education section of the Chinese Embassy and the Ministry of Education in Taiwan (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports and Science & Technology in Japan 2016).

[15] This data relies on the number of degree-seeking and non-degree-seeking students studying abroad under or outside inter-university exchange agreements (Japan Student Services Organization 2014).

reports show that in conjunction with the decreasing percentage of Japanese students studying in the major destinations like the U.S.A., the U.K. and China,[16] educational destinations have become diverse (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports and Science & Technology in Japan 2016; Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet 2011). Despite these diverse global destinations of Japanese students, previous studies on the temporal outflows of the Japanese have been confined to major global countries and cities, such as New York and London (Fujita 2009), Vancouver (Kato 2010), and Australia (Andressen and Kumagai 1996; Kawashima 2012; Sato 1993). To date, there have been no studies on the Japanese abroad which focuses on a smaller context such as Dublin. Further to this, I had lived in Dublin at the turn of the twenty-first century, and this was decisive in selecting the city as my fieldwork site. My research was also facilitated by being set in a city as compact as Dublin.

In recent years, the increase in transnational movement that does not involve long-term residency has been discernible. As I will explore in more detail in Chapter Three, transnational mobility amongst youths that was initially led by students is increasingly being undertaken not only by degree-students but also by those outside mainstream degree-programmes such as people engaged in language learning or working holiday schemes. Indeed, the implementation of the working holiday policy is thought to have contributed to the growing number of young adults travelling abroad, increasing in number from 884 in 1981 to 20,845 in 2013 (Global Action for Careers and Employability n.d.). In parallel with the popularity of the working holiday scheme, the

[16] For example, the percentage of Japanese students who choose to study in the U.S.A. has decreased from 60 per cent in 2000 to 35 per cent in 2013 (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports and Science & Technology in Japan 2016; Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet 2011).

number of students who participate particularly in short-term study abroad programmes of less than one month has been increasing (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports and Science & Technology in Japan 20160). It is evident that in a time of increased short-term movement of young Japanese people, a temporary life overseas is becoming a more common experience. Certainly, given how mobility is increasingly regulated within a legal framework, temporariness is becoming integral to experiences of living overseas. In this respect, exploring the migration experiences of my participants is a response to such temporary migrations of Japanese youths and the diversification of the destinations they are travelling to. My study acknowledges the major mobility paths of Japanese youths towards the West, but seeks to explore how they experience migration to a small Western city populated with a limited number of Japanese residents. This thesis asks: what impact does temporary migration have on their identity? And does migration play a part in the process of identity making? By tackling these questions, my research discusses youth migration within a broader context of Japanese contemporary migration, while interrogating their relationship to Japanese society, as well as evaluating the role that migration plays in identity formation.

Thesis layout

Before moving on to analysing the empirical data that I collected from my fieldwork, it is important to provide information on how I conducted my research, as well as theoretical considerations on various discourses necessary to situate my participants in the context of post-war Japan. Chapter Two details the ways in which my field research was conducted. In order to understand the migrant experience of my participants, I

provide details on the methodology of my research. The framework of ethnography was employed in my research and helps provide empirical accounts of everyday lives in Dublin, which I then analysed. In the methodology section I also discuss the strength and limitations of my micro-level research.

Chapter Three explores a theoretical understanding of the intersection of migration and identity. I draw upon concepts of identity, the Stranger, masculinity, femininity and selfhood to help contextualise the discourses surrounding contemporary Japanese youths seeking to travel abroad. These key concepts provide some useful perspectives for understanding how a sense of being Japanese, gender ideals and mainstream lifestyle norms have been constructed through Japanese political and historical trajectories. Importantly, the recent shift in the orientation of a meaningful life from collective to individual self-fulfilment has brought about diverse forms of mobility practices amongst younger generations. Therefore, research into how the younger generations' sense of being Japanese is interrelated with contemporary Japanese migration, as well as how their identities change through the process of travelling abroad, are ways of unpacking the role of migration. The following ethnographic chapters demonstrate the ways in which the participants experienced processes of becoming through their journeys to Dublin.

In Chapter Four, I explore the lives of Japanese youths with a focus on their reasons for travelling to Dublin. Young Japanese men and women left Japan in order to begin a new life and build cultural capital, even if temporarily. Despite the differing reasons for their travels, central to the impetus to leave their local lives behind was a resistance to

pursuing an expected life course, predominantly shaped by gendered ideals. Yet, constraints for Japanese men and women were not the same. In order to examine the divergent motivations for youth migration, I look at the ways in which they negotiated between gendered ideals and their personal desires. I also provide a comparative analysis of gendered processes of migration towards the end of the chapter.

Chapter Five discusses the ways in which collective national and ethnic identities were formed and manifested amongst various groups of my participants. The Great East Japan Earthquake that occurred in March 2011 not only heightened a national consciousness but also brought dynamic changes to the lives of the participants and the ways that they viewed Japan. The aim of this chapter is to explore these issues primarily through the lens of a student-centred charity group that was created to mediate a temporal solidarity between temporary and long-term Japanese residents. In the construction of a Japanese national identity, the moral discourse of *nihonjinron* was employed as the source of Japanese nationalism. I will demonstrate how the participants navigated this discourse, and how ideas of an ethnic heritage were expressed during charity activities. This is accompanied by an examination of how they experienced the transformation of identities in the post-3.11 context.

Chapter Six also looks at the construction of a Japanese national and ethnic identity but through their day-to-day interactions with Others. In their post-migration phase, their Irish experience contributed towards altering their pre-held perception of Ireland as representing the symbolic values of Western cultural modernity. In addition, everyday encounters with Asian Others were instrumental in re-defining Japan's cultural and

economic superiority. Claims of cultural and economic superiority over backward Asian Others, particularly the Chinese, were made through their privileged access to various forms of capital and the lifestyle of Western societies. I explore how the negotiation of power relationships between the West and Asia came into play in delineating a Japanese collective identity, as well as how habitus and capital played out in processes of identity transformation.

Chapter Seven explores the ways in which the participants developed their identities and a sense of belonging, as well as how these factors determined their next destination. Although many of my participants, both male and female, were proud of their ability to migrate, many of the male participants, who were in their late twenties and early thirties, were resigned to returning to a 'traditional' life course in Japan. In contrast, younger Japanese men and women were more open to various social opportunities. I also consider how the transformation of identities intersected with gender and life stage, and how the practice of lifestyle migration was also limited by legal and social structures.

In Chapter Eight, I conclude the thesis by reflecting on how the participants transformed their identities through navigating their personal desires and the multiple discourses which were a part of the migration process. The migration experiences from the perspectives of national, ethnic, gender and class relations that stratified my participants in the Dublin context, reveal the diverse realities of becoming a migrant as well as a Japanese person. Simultaneously, their processes of identity-making underline the roles that migration may play in transforming identities. By interrogating these processes, my research offers an important ethnographic contribution to a better understanding of the

identity-migration nexus. This examination addresses the influences that migration may have on identity-making and ultimately the implications of the processes of ‘becoming Japanese’ in transnational space.

Chapter Two: Methodology

Research participants' demographics

This thesis grapples with the question of the complex relationship between identity construction and temporary migration, and thereby aims to reveal potential roles that migration plays in constructing Japanese youths' identities. In order to examine these issues, it is crucial to provide a methodology upon which the processes of the production of this thesis can be based. Although there are many legal categories for Japanese residents in Dublin, this thesis focuses on those involved in individually-motivated migration in the category of *chōki taizaisha* (temporary migrants); that is, I look at the lives of Japanese people who entered Ireland on temporary visas with the intention of staying in Ireland for more than three months. My participants were in their twenties and thirties, with the exception of one participant who was a forty-year old student, and are both male and female, and moved from Japan to Dublin individually through their own initiative. Thus, my sample does not include those who were sent to Ireland by a Japanese corporation and their families, or those with the intention of permanent settlement, who accompanied their foreign partners who were returning to Ireland, or those married to locals. My 35 research participants were grouped into four subcategories according to their visa status: work permit holder (Stamp 1), working holiday makers (Stamp 1), students enrolled in language or business schools (Stamp 2) and degree-students (Stamp 2).

The number of work permit holders, working holiday makers, students and

degree-students – either an undergraduate student at a local university or an exchange student from a Japanese university – were respectively 1, 17, 13 and 4. It is very difficult to draw a clear demarcation between working holiday makers and language students, because both groups were engaged in schooling regardless of the duration of the courses that they attended. Working holiday makers, in most cases, arbitrarily signed up to English language schools, paying for classes that ran between a few weeks to a whole academic year, although it was not part of the requirement of the working holiday scheme. In contrast, student visa holders were essentially obliged to achieve a certain percentage of school attendance and complete schooling whether following an undergraduate programme or an English language course. It was also often the case that the people in this group switched their visa status from that of a working holiday to a student visa. Because a working holiday visa is valid for one year and is only single entry, about a quarter of them (nine participants) had switched their visa status from working holiday to student, or renewed their student visa a few times in order to extend their stay in Ireland. Whilst there was a demographic crossover in these groups of temporary migrants, it is noteworthy that my participants were mainly women (77 per cent).

The fact that there were only a small number of male participants (eight people) amongst this group needs to be understood with regard to how migration is gendered. In the aforementioned 2015 statistics, the number of women in the categories of permanent residents, long-term residents and ‘others’ to which working holiday makers are classified, overwhelmingly surpasses that of men; women constitute 91 per cent, 68 per

cent, 71 per cent and 88 per cent respectively.[17] This imbalance in sex ratio is investigated further in Chapter Four. I consider how gender mediates the practice of international migration amongst Japanese youths. In addition, it is important to note that my participants' profiles are not significantly heterogeneous in terms of socio-economic backgrounds and educational levels; other than five participants who entered the workforce upon graduating from high school, all of my participants received and were receiving higher education; two participants were at vocational college, one participant at technical college, six at junior college and 21 at university. My interviews with this group revealed that except for three degree-students, none of the others were fully dependent on their family; many held down part-time jobs in Dublin but were also reliant on their savings from Japan. This highlights that the phenomenon of Japanese youth migration is largely centred on the relatively affluent. In the section below, I detail how I enabled access to my participants and collected data for this thesis.

Access to the field and research participants

This thesis employs an ethnographic method to explore the lives of young Japanese temporary migrants in Dublin. On the 17th of September in 2010, I arrived in Dublin to begin a year of field research. Since the lives of my participants in Dublin encapsulate manifold social realities, qualitative fieldwork produced a volume of empirical data, which enables me to describe the lived realities of their lives in Dublin. In anthropology, participant observation lies at the core of research method (DeWalt and DeWalt 2002: 1). Following Malinowski, participant observation is central to modern British social

[17] These numbers exclude visa applicants' families.

anthropology. He set the standard for ethnographic data collection, emphasising the importance of grasping the concepts of the communities when studied from within (ibid.: 1-5; Ellen 1984: 14-15). The experience of long-term participant observation in the field remains essential to acquiring an emic viewpoint; by placing an ethnographer within the context of everyday life, the subjects' point of view can be grasped. In this way, participant observation obliges the 'ethnographic self' to be immersed in the field so that the ethnographer can learn, and later analyse, what they have observed (Crang and Cook 2007: 37; Bernard 2002: 324). Participant observation is typically allied to a number of other techniques, such as interviewing, photographing and filming, to enhance the quality of the empirical data collection (Crang and Cook 2007). Accordingly, my ethnographic research draws on participant observation and interviews for my data collection, which were documented through fieldnotes and photography.

My fieldwork was carried out from mid-September 2010 to the beginning of October the following year. In order to undertake participant observation, an urgent first task was to locate social points of connection with potential research participants. Since my target group was Japanese people who travelled to Dublin individually and temporarily, I needed to determine how to increase the probability of meeting such mobile, dispersed people. I first considered visiting venues such as Japanese restaurants or English language schools as possible sites for participant-observation; I had thought that working at a restaurant or attending a language school would enable me to meet Japanese youths. However, after the experience of staying in Dublin as a language student nearly a decade previously, I knew that Japanese restaurants would have few Japanese workers and customers; especially for Japanese people who fitted the profile I

was seeking, Japanese restaurants would not be a place to visit regularly because of their high prices. Similarly, attending a language schools financially unviable and in addition, I felt it would not lead to meeting a sufficient number of Japanese youths. Therefore, I looked for a slightly more fluid fieldsite which would allow me to access a large number of mobile Japanese people. As I had not had any prior contact with potential participants, I looked up information on social groups for Japanese people living in Dublin on the Japanese Social Networking Service *mixi* which is widely used amongst all ages of Japanese. This search came in useful, and introduced me to my very first participant, Ayaka, whom I will describe in Chapter Three. When I was looking for accommodation in and around the city centre on *mixi*, I came into contact with Ayaka who had come to Dublin as a working holiday maker. The encounter with her led me to several other working holiday makers who were friends of hers. However, as they had already established their lives in Dublin through part-time work or a language school, it was not easy for me to enter their social circles and to get to know them during their time-off. Instead of relying on such sporadic meeting opportunities, I wanted to find a site that would enable me to not just meet, but also observe and interact with Japanese youths on a more regular basis.

In tandem with this, I contacted a staff member of the Japanese Embassy in Ireland to identify places where I could meet Japanese youths living in Dublin. Just as Siu claims that it is typical of a migrant to develop in-group relationships with people of their own ethnic group in not only their ethnic enclave but also various spatially scattered venues of social contacts (1952: 36), I had anticipated that there would be several social spaces for the Japanese in Dublin. I was informed that the Japanese Embassy recognised the

existence of a few voluntary organised cultural groups. One such place was a group that went by the name of 'Japanese meetup' – a Japan-Ireland Social Group (hereafter 'the meetup'). This socio-cultural exchange group between the Irish and Japanese was set up in 2006 by an Irish woman who had the experience of living and working in Japan, with the aim of fostering language and cultural exchanges in an informal social setting.

Before I paid my first visit to the meetup in early October in 2010, I posted a self-introductory message on the meetup forum with a view to inviting prospective participants. I received only one response. Subsequently, without having a clear picture of how the meetup would operate, my first experience started with a Coke at a table with two Japanese women in their twenties. The two attendees at this table apparently knew each other and were catching up with each other's lives in a friendly tone. Feeling reluctant to barge into their conversation, I managed to introduce myself as a researcher and felt excited, but also a little awkward in this new social context. After conversing with them for a little while, I went around randomly talking to as many people as possible that night, so as to familiarise myself with the social space. Some seemed to have come to the meetup for the first time, looking for opportunities to merge with other attendees as I had, while some seemed to be regular attendees, looking comfortable talking to other regular members. After visiting this venue a few times, I learnt that the meetup was not exclusive to Japanese people but was open to anyone with an interest in Japanese language and culture, as the name of the group implied. Typically, meetup nights had large numbers of Japanese compared to non-Japanese; for example, on one occasion it accommodated about seven non-Japanese attendees, whereas the Japanese attendees numbered over 30. Most of the Japanese attendees at the meetup were either

working holiday makers or language students in their twenties and thirties, who had come to Ireland individually and temporarily. The meetup was an ideal context from which to begin my fieldwork.

My routine visit to the meetup with an eye to recruiting research participants normalised my presence and gradually enabled me to expand my network and gain constant updates about their lives. Ever since my first attendance at this gathering, I had never failed to find some new faces each time I went. Aside from a few Irish and Japanese organisers of the meetup, the vast majority of the Japanese attendees formed a changing population due to the fact of their transitory stay in Ireland. This social space saw many young Japanese come and go, meet and part. There was one night when a Japanese group of Dublin City University students came to the meetup to say goodbye to Richard, a young Irishman who had significantly contributed to fundraising activities after the earthquake struck northeast Japan in March 2011 (see Chapter Four). This meetup was also the same evening when one former-working holiday maker and an Irish girl, Éadaoin, first met without the slightest idea that they would have a baby the following year.

As my fieldwork progressed, I came to realise that the meetup functioned as the primary entrance to the beginnings of a life in Dublin for Japanese newcomers. In this social space I came in contact with Japanese youths who were not yet connected to the locals or a local social life and were searching for some links to their homeland and its people. Their purpose for attending the meetup corresponded to mine, that is, to meet people. They frequented the meetup nights in order to make friends with the Irish but more importantly to stay connected with other Japanese youths and share information about

practical issues such as getting a visa, finding a school or job vacancies.

Soon after starting to frequent meetup nights, I learnt that the majority of these youths also attended language exchange sessions taking place on Saturdays at the Central Library in the ILAC shopping centre. The weekly sessions were run by the Dublin City Council and were aimed at fostering language and cultural exchanges. Many Japanese youths were presumably involved in leaning the English language, so social spaces in which to practise the language were likely to be important for their Irish experience. Thus, the Saturday sessions functioned almost in the same way as the meetup nights, but the meetup was preferred by Japanese youths since it provided a more enjoyable, relaxed social space for them. For me, these social spaces were of critical importance in gaining access to dispersed, mobile Japanese individuals. Also, for them, the meetup was possibly the most significant social point of contact with other Japanese youths and with local society or the Irish. Because not all Japanese attendees were engaged in economic activities or educational programmes, they, let alone newcomers, were not able to anchor their sense of belonging anywhere else in Dublin. These people came to the meetup and the language exchange venue so they could have something consistent in a fluctuating environment in a foreign land. They, albeit temporarily, were constructing their new lives in a foreign country and craved those moments of connection in this transient stage of their lives.

These sites were ideal for the purpose of increasing my chances of meeting such Japanese individuals. However, in the process of recruiting potential research participants at the meetup and the Saturday language exchange, the biggest difficulty

that I faced in the early stages of my fieldwork was how to carry out qualitative research with a sufficient number of participants. This was precisely because the people I wanted to work primarily with were constantly moving from place to place. Indeed, throughout my fieldwork I witnessed these ongoing journeys from Japan to Ireland, and again from Ireland to Japan or other new places. It was often the case that even if the working holiday makers I came to know were based in Dublin, they were often out of town travelling around Ireland and Europe or soon moved to other cities in Ireland so as to work or study. Also, at the beginning of fieldwork, I immediately set up an interview with those who fitted my research participant profile, that is, Japanese single men and women living on temporary visas. Although this definitely helped me learn how to handle an interview, I began questioning the quality of the data gathered from people whom I had met only once prior to an interview and whom I would probably never meet again. Moreover, I came to realise that although the respondents willingly consented to interviews, they, regardless of gender, did not easily invite me into their private lives and circles of friends outside of the interview occasions. Therefore, in order to do better qualitative research, the first few months of my fieldwork were focused on identifying prospective participants; i.e., not just asking who but also for how long they planned on staying in Dublin, as well as building rapport with as many people as possible. While I was searching for temporary migrants whose stay might synchronise with my fieldwork period for at the very least four months, participant observation at the aforementioned sites remained my primary method for data collection.

Over the course of my fieldwork, more opportunities came along where I could socialise with a number of Japanese people; I got to accompany them to various kinds of

occasions such as karaoke, BBQ, home party, short trip, wedding and festive and evening activities. This intimate level of interaction, however, was not possible until I joined a temporary migrant-based volunteer group, Aid Japan Dublin (AJD). It was formed in the wake of the earthquake and tsunami that hit the northeast coast of Japan on the 11th of March 2011 by Japanese working holiday makers. The organisers of AJD were those who occasionally frequented the meetup and they ended up using it as a platform for communication with volunteers. After the launch of AJD, I devoted a considerable amount of time to working with volunteers who were mostly Japanese, participating in a number of collections and activities organised by the group. AJD created a transient space of belonging for some temporary migrants who had felt that they did not belong anywhere in Dublin and also generated greater opportunities for the majority of Japanese youths as well as me, to meet more frequently in a bounded context. While engaging in volunteer activities, I had many chances to chat with other Japanese volunteers who were new to Dublin. Though most of the volunteers were those whom I had known through the meetup and Saturday language sessions, getting involved in AJD helped me establish a close relationship with Japanese youth. It was primarily after the 3.11 event that I got to spend a lot of time hanging out with them, observe their lives closely and gain additional opportunities for interviews. In addition, not only did getting involved in AJD boost the chance of meeting more Japanese youths, it also provided me with a new channel to meet Japanese people who were married locally, or involved in Japanese-related organisations, social groups and food venues. Although these social groups and other types of demographic of Japanese residents in Dublin are beyond the scope of this thesis, gaining access to AJD was conducive to helping me enrich my understanding of the diverse realities of Japanese people living in

Dublin. In Chapter Five I explore how the 3.11 crisis played a significant part in their becoming aware of a sense of collective belonging. Their Irish experiences of volunteering and participating in such Japanese gatherings as the meetup nights and the Saturday language exchange sessions, made me reflect on how they both lived as foreigners in the context of Dublin and identified as Japanese as part of an imagined collective.

Interviews and research ethics

In these social spaces, throughout 12 months of fieldwork in Dublin, I encountered hundreds of Japanese people, mostly those on temporary visas and spoke to them in various social settings. As a result, I was able to do qualitative interviews with a smaller select sample of people, interviewing 35 Japanese, both female (27) and male (8) aged from 21 to 40 at the time. Interviewing is a crucial means of data collection through which the ethnographer can gain substantial knowledge of the lives of participants. Amongst interview methods ranging from the highly structured survey to the relatively unstructured interview which normally focuses on a small number of participants (Crang and Cook 2007: 60), this thesis draws upon personal narratives from semi-structured interviews, conducted through open-ended questions. I had a broad range of topics concerning my participants' lives, such as family background, education and career in Japan, motivations for moving to Dublin, their current lives in the city, as well marriage and their prospects for the future. Open-ended interviews based on these questions gave me insight into the personal histories of my participants. Research participants senior to me and with whom I developed a close relationship tended to

invite me over to their houses for interviews. Except for such occasions, interviews usually took place in public places such as cafés, restaurants and parks. Each interview lasted two hours on average. Also, as some participants did not feel comfortable about their conversations being recorded, I used a Dictaphone, depending on their preferences and the circumstances of the interviews. By doing this, I attempted to conduct in-depth interviews in a similar manner to free conversation or friendly rapport, so as to elicit more revealing self-narratives. In addition, I took photos of interesting phenomena. I also jotted down the behaviours, interactions with and conversations of my participants in the field, and turned the notes into fieldnotes after returning home. I recorded the events of the day in fieldnotes, together with my own reflections and concerns, along with identifying future tasks for later analysis.

With regard to research ethics, the need for informed consent when interviewing research participants was crucial. The implementation of anthropological ethics requires a set of questions used to re-evaluate the procedures of production knowledge (Meskell and Pels 2005: 4). Ethical considerations have become indispensable when conducting fieldwork. Thus I accordingly complied with the ethics code issued by SOAS and other professional bodies such as Association of Social Anthropologists of the UK and Commonwealth (ASA), Royal Anthropological Institute (RAI) and American Anthropological Association (AAA) so as to avoid any possible issues of misconduct that might emerge during fieldwork. In gaining access to prospective research participants, these codes of ethics set a guideline of informed consent that should be obtained at the initial point of research. However, in some situations the request of written consent is liable to bring about tension between the researcher and the subject.

Silverman (2003) in her long-term research in rural Ireland provides the example of informed verbal consent, which she describes as best suited to the context of a small population since it did not destroy amicable mutual relationships. In Silverman's case, a non-formalised verbal consent allowed her to construct a delicately balanced relationship between participants. Additionally informed consent is a constant process that should be "renewed each day" (2003: 117). Along similar lines, in the case of my research, adopting the strategy of verbal consent was invaluable in building a close relationship with my participants. In particular, because of the initial difficulty that I had in entering their social circles, as I describe above, I felt the need to lower the degree of formality on interview occasions. Thus, verbal consent was obtained at the start of an interview, and was followed by presenting participants with the purpose and outline of my research, the anticipated consequences of the project and the utilities of the data gained from them, as well as asking to what degree they would like to preserve confidentiality and anonymity. In the case of non-recorded interviews, I asked the participants involved to check the accuracy of my use of their words in the process of producing this thesis.

Reflexivity

My positionality impacted the data collection in various ways. As the extent to which participants open up to an ethnographer is subject to relative social standing, it is pertinent to assume that participants convey partial information of themselves (McVeigh 1997: 45-46). I was concerned with how my profile would impact on data collection. Indeed, the majority of my participants and I shared similar cultural,

religious and generational backgrounds. The dilemmas associated with the approach of 'anthropology at home' stem precisely from the perceived commonalities with subjects. Anthropologists studying their own society must push to go beyond their 'self,' putting aside their own subjective points of view (Strathern 1987: 17). Although a completely detached and neutral stance towards unbiased results and consequences is not possible, as data cannot be independent of how it is acquired (Pack 2006: 106), achieving and maintaining a self-critical awareness was challenging for me. Because I was seen to belong to the same community, the effort to maintain a suitable distance was made by using appropriate language and complying with a Japanese social code of conduct. The use of appropriate language played a key role in the inclusion/exclusion processes. As a native Japanese speaker, most of the interviews and interactions with participants were carried out in Japanese and the choice of certain modes of expression had to be carefully taken into account in constructing relationships with participants. Briefly put, the use of honorific language on the part of junior women is necessary in any hierarchical relationship in Japanese society, and is largely determined not just by age and gender, but also by status differences and the degree of intimacy between the speakers. Thus the level of polite usage can be an instant criterion in assessing the social distance between research participants. Hendry (1993) warns that *keigo* (honorific language) functions as "a kind of passport" to gain access to certain groups who share the same skills and backgrounds, through which levels of intimacy, class and status can be measured by the choice of words (1993: 63). Taking this into account, I was very careful about my manner of speaking, especially when gaining initial access to people. This was because even in a foreign context, expectations of the roles determined by such factors as age, gender, personality and social status tended to endure. Therefore, the use of formal

honorific words was a tactical deployment to create and maintain some social distance and a degree of formality.

At the same time, it is important to stress that there are analytical limits to my interpretation because writing ethnographic texts takes place "within a particular history of a specific ethnographer and her participants," so that "any account" is always "partial and located, screened through the narrator's eye/I" (Kondo 1990: 8; see also Clifford and Marcus 1986). Although I, as an insider, felt I was able to correctly grasp the meaning of participants' descriptions, implications or the nonverbal signals that they used due to our cultural proximity, all the data gained from my fieldwork were filtered through my positionality which was constantly negotiated through the processes of the production of this thesis.

Whilst there were certainly disadvantages arising from an emic approach, revealing some aspects of my background did not prevent me from establishing trustworthy relationships but rather worked positively, because many of the people whom I met were interested in my life as much as I was in theirs. There is of course the possibility that my being older than the majority of my participants might have created a situation where they felt obliged to take part in my research. But as I proceeded with my field research, it dawned on me that my search for prospective participants and settling into a new environment paralleled the experiences of most of the participants who had travelled to Dublin, without having any prior contacts. Many shared similarities with the majority of my participants with regard to the temporariness of our stay in Dublin, student status and being single, often resulting in the creation of a sense of affinity with

people who claimed not to fit into Japanese society and strove to enact a unique way of life without being constrained by a dominant idea of how to live as a Japanese person. The perceived uncertainty and the freer lifestyle that they saw in my positionality resonated with their own experience. In addition, my questions about their lives before and after the move to Dublin, such as family, career aspiration, future, marriage and a sense of belonging and marginality, were issues they could instantly relate to. That they participated in my research, I believe, also became an opportunity for them to reflect on their own narratives about their journeys to, and experiences in, Dublin.

I am aware that the Japanese with whom I worked throughout my fieldwork were only a small proportion of the Japanese migrants residing in Dublin. As my fieldwork revolved around the contacts that I gained from the meetup and Saturday language sessions, as well as their spin-off group AJD, I came in contact mostly with those who sought to interact with other Japanese of their age and find a place of connection with local society in some way. Indeed, these social spaces were rarely attended by those who had already established their lives in Dublin, such as work permit holders, students enrolled in higher education courses, expatriates or those married to local Irishmen or women; that is, those who had a firm place of belonging in Dublin. Accordingly, the vast majority of my participants were language students and working holiday makers who had come to Dublin relatively recently. This thesis therefore does not attempt to explore the processes of identity making resulting from long-term migration, but rather sheds light on only a part of the Japanese population who attempted to search for a place of belonging and a moment of connection in a new social environment in the short term. Hammersley (1992: 85-95) reminds us that the validity of ethnographic accounts needs

to be considered in light of the extent to which generalisation can be made. Ethnographic studies provide the groundwork for claims to a generalised understanding of a certain population in a specific time and place. The narratives of my participants, as presented in this thesis, are by no means representative of all Japanese mobile youths travelling abroad. However, my year of field research, conducted primarily through participant observation and interviews, makes a contribution to a greater understanding of the growing trend of temporary migration amongst Japanese youths living in Dublin, as well as other parts of the world. In addition I interrogate how migration and a temporary sojourn in Dublin, has affected their sense of self. Thus, this thesis examines youth migration, which is one aspect of the multiple intersections of migration and identity in a globalising world.

Chapter Three: Migration, identity and Japanese national discourses

In the Introduction, I outlined the questions raised by the experience of young Japanese in Dublin, and asked what this teaches us about migration in relation to how identities are constituted. Taking migration as a window from which to examine the socialisation of individuals through movement, this thesis attempts to disentangle the identity-migration nexus in the context of Japanese migration to Dublin. Before interrogating whether or not, and how migration intersects with the transformation of one's identity with empirical data, it is crucial to ground my research in the wider landscape of migration and Japanese studies for examining the relationship between the construction of identity and migration. In this literature review, while laying out key issues integral to questions of migration and identity in the general historical context, I first examine how identity has been constructed in Japanese historical processes and shifts in attitudes towards conventional 'ideal' lifestyles in Japan. I then outline the main characteristics of post-war Japanese migration in order to link contemporary Japanese migration to the burgeoning field of lifestyle migration.

The idea of identity in migration studies is closely tied to issues of belonging, in both the legal and emotional sense. While the discursive concept of identity in the social sciences has been theorised in many ways, the most influential theory interprets the notion of identity as the *process* of identifying with the commonalities of a group through the recognition of Others (Gilroy 1994; Hall 1996; Lebra 2004; Savage *et al.* 2005). To quote Stuart Hall's (1996) conceptualisation of identity, as opposed to a traditional view of identity constructed "on the back of a recognition of some common

origin or shared characteristics with another person or group, or with an ideal, and with the natural closure of solidarity and allegiance established on this foundation" (1996.: 2), social theorists see identity as never stabilised nor complete but as fragmented, transformative and an ongoing process of marking symbolic boundaries (ibid.: 3-4). Identities are constructed within particular historical discourses, and identity making processes not only involve the comparison between "similarity and difference" and "between individuals and collectivities" (Jenkins 2004: 3-4) but also are interwoven with power relations (Hall 1996: 3). A constant process of becoming negotiates a social positioning mediated through the politics of differentiation. Therefore, identity lies not in roots or the present – "who we are" or "where we came from" – but in routes – the process of becoming "using the resources of history, language, and culture" (ibid.: 4). In the course of a life, individuals continuously practise a process of identification which can never be singular and is always multiple, and is transformed through constructions of the self (Hall 1992: 276-277, 287; see also Bauman 2004: 15). Adopting this constructivist perspective, I use the term identity as indicating an ongoing process of one's becoming. This process of becoming is also dependent on the social roles articulated within a given group (Ossewaarde 2007: 367). Exploring various modes of becoming through migration provides a way of understanding the complexity of the migrant's socialisation process within global space.

In addition, it is beneficial to tie my research to the new conceptual framework of lifestyle migration mapped out by Benson and O'Reilly (2009). Lifestyle migration is practised by relatively well-off individuals, mostly the middle-classes,[1] who move to

[1] In the Japanese context, the question of class identification in public opinion poll by the Cabinet

different places in order to resettle (in)definitely to achieve a better quality of life (Benson and O'Reilly 2009: 609). In order to understand the lives of my participants within this non-economic form of migration, it is imperative to comprehend the structural mechanisms surrounding migration and the process of transforming identities that migration potentially bring about.

Japan's modernisation

For an understanding of the processes of migration amongst my participants, it is essential to contextualise the migration of Japanese people in relation to Japan's history of becoming a nation-state. The Meiji Restoration in 1868 marked a turning point in modern Japanese history. Before the Meiji period (1868-1912), the Tokugawa Shogunate (1603-1868) based in Edo, today known as Tokyo, ruled the main islands of Japan. The shoguns in effect held hegemonic political power over the Emperor who had long been only a symbolic authority. In the Tokugawa feudal system 260 daimyo (feudal lords) governing their fiefs were subordinated to the shogun (Benson and Matsumura 2001: 14) and thereby people's lives were shaped within regionally isolated domains. The process of nation-building that had been brought about by the overthrow of the Tokugawa regime vested sovereignty in the Emperor, leading to the establishment of the colonial empire that lasted until 1945. Japan's empire-building from the Meiji (1868-1912) through the Taishō (1912-1926) to the early Shōwa (1926-1989) was accompanied by the annexations of Ryukyu in 1879, Taiwan in 1895, Korea in 1910 and

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Office is divided into five economic categories; upper, upper-middle, middle, lower-middle, and lower. Whist there is clearly heterogeneity within the 'middle-class,' in this thesis I use the term middle-class to denote the middle strata that encompasses heterogeneous socioeconomic backgrounds.

Manchuria in 1931. In these historical periods, the construction of a sense of being Japanese, like every other modern nation, became possible only through interaction with the Other (Raz 1992). In Japanese history, the incipient social model of Otherness had been "China-as-Other" (ibid.: 31). It was followed by "Asia-as-Other" from the end of the nineteenth century and was replaced by the "Europe (and later, the 'West')-as-Other" paradigm (ibid.). In these transformations in the representation of Otherness, it was the rise of Japan as a colonial power that precipitated changes in the power dynamics of Asia.

China had long exercised enormous influence on Japan in terms of language, religion and social organisation. However, Japan's contact with the Other was significantly limited by the national seclusion policy that lasted nearly 200 years from the 1630s until the ratification of The Japan-U.S. Treaty of Amity and Commerce in 1858. Under this policy commoners were forbidden to travel abroad (Wilson 2002: 4) and foreign trade was controlled by the Tokugawa Shogunate. However, the policy only applied largely to the U.S.A. and most European countries, while Japan's trade associations with China, the Korean Peninsula, the Ryukyu kingdom and the Netherlands continued (Beasley 1991: 21; Globe 2007: 58). It was only after the establishment of the Meiji nation-state that integration of the territories of ethnically, religiously and regionally heterogeneous people into the boundaries of the state was successful; the 'barbarian' Ainu (the indigenous people living in the northern island of Japan), the Okinawans (indigenous to the islands to the south of Kyūshū*)* and the 'polluted' *Burakumin* (the descendants of the outcast communities of the Tokugawa era) were subject to assimilation into a collective national entity (Roth 2005).

Marked by Japan's victory in the Sino-Japanese War (1894-95), the Chinese influence on Japan dimmed in significance, giving way to the influence of the West at the beginning of the twentieth century (Clammer 2001: 47). The West came to replace China as Japan's ideal of modernity and progress (Tanaka 1993: 36). It is within this context that the ideology of race provided a justification for Japan's 'mission' to modernise economically, institutionally and technologically inferior Asia (ibid.: 66). Indeed, as Japan became integrated into the global political system, the Japanese experience of modernisation took place in line with Japan's national interest in territorial expansion in a response to a Western imperialism that saw the country subjugate parts of East Asia and the Pacific. Meiji Japan saw the progress of the individual and society as essential to the establishment of a new, strong modern empire (Doak 2007: 169-171). Japanese society in the Meiji period was "an attempt to blend societies of the periphery into the official image of a united and centralized nation" by implementing "the Western-inspired version of civilization" for the progress of society (Morris-Suzuki 1998: 24). Paralleling the ideology of the West which saw itself as superior to the backward Orient, the social thinker Fukuzawa wrote an editorial advocating '*Datsu-A-Ron*' (脱亜論, literally 'leaving Asia theory'): the dissociation of Japan from Asia and alliance with Europe in order to achieve Western levels of civilisation (Tanaka 1993: 38). The racial hierarchy constructed during the Japanese colonial period empowered Japan to represent itself as a moderniser, resulting in the demarcation between 'civilised' Japanese and 'uncivilised' Asian Others (Shimazu 2006: 57-61; Weiner 1994: 21-24). Japanese colonialism in a sense meant not only entering the international arena (Wilson 2002: 8) but also led to the nation situating

itself in the nexus between the West and Asia. These pre-war discourses, particularly of an ethnic-approach to nationalism, remain the source for the classification of we/other, Japanese/non-Japanese.

Japanese national identity

As I have noted, the development of imagining collective ties with the nation as opposed to regional allegiances began only after the Meiji period. The construction of identity is considered to be primarily rooted in the idea of a shared history and common origins, which is conventionally found within the same political national boundaries, usually within the nation. For many scholars like Anderson (1991) and Gellner (1964), the nation is a modern construct, consisting of an "imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign" (Anderson 1991: 6) as community members are linked to a version of history, which brings people into a broader political unity by establishing a sense of collective ties and belonging, leading to the formation of a community beyond a face-to-face network.[2] Central to the concept of nation are legal and political rights and duties which designate commitments and obligations between the members of a nation (Gellner 1983: 7; Poole 2005: 272; Smith 1991: 9-10). With the development of print capitalism (Anderson 1991: 25), standardised and shared values are inculcated through the education system and reified by such symbols as "flags, coinage, anthems, uniforms, monuments and ceremonies" (Smith 1991: 16-17). A sense of nationhood is then equated with an equal sense of belonging to the nation where various segments of groups are subsumed into a coherent, imagined national

[2] Gellner (1964: 169) notes: "Nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness: it *invents* nations where they do not exist."

unity.

In Meiji Japan, the enactment of the new state led by a small elite resulted in the abolition of the four-tier class system and the Meiji government's urgent task was to inculcate a sense of nationhood into people of all classes and regions. Japan's claim to be a nation-state entailed various levels of nationalising process; the implementation of conscription and universal education, as well as the establishment of an *ie* (family) system helped to shape linguistic and structural unification (Wilson 2002: 4-7). In particular, the *ie*, which can also designate a dwelling space, remains as the important socio-economic unit to understanding modern Japanese society. It is a system that originated with the elite samurai-class during the Tokugawa era and was legally defined under the Meiji Civil Code promulgated in 1898, with the state setting the obligations and rights for the inheritance of family property, as predominately patrilineal and based on primogeniture (Ronald and Alexy 2011: 1). This patriarchal familial structure served to articulate women's roles in Japanese society.

Coinciding with Japan's industrialisation, young unmarried women of the rural, lower classes began to underpin the household economy of the emerging middle-class as child-minders and the light manufacturing sector of the textile industry as a cheap labour force from the end of the nineteenth century (Roberts 2005: 106-107; Robins-Mowry 1983: 36-39). Whilst these women, whose work placements were arranged by their fathers or grandfathers, were a major labour force that contributed not only to the state economy but also to their natal households, it was through marriage that women were eventually expected to participate in the nation: women were

encouraged to cease work after marriage and be committed to their roles within the household (Kobayashi 1994: 49-51). This social pressure was reflected in the ideology of a 'good wife, wise mother' from the late 1890s; this ideology was premised on the idea that women's contribution to the nation through the roles assigned in the *ie* would strengthen the state against the threats of Western imperialism. The ideal female was expected to be a woman of self-sacrificing spirit who played respectable roles not only within the domestic domain but also in relation to the nation-state (Lowy 2007: 4; Uno 1998: 229). From this perspective, the Confucian-based ideology that assigned women a subordinate status to men (father, husband and sons) was not considered "a feudalistic remnant of the *ie* system" but was projected onto women as subjects in order to underpin the nation-state, thereby casting them as symbols of tradition (Ochiai 2000: 107).

Along with the enactment of the *ie* system that imposed dual allegiances to the households and the nation-state, it was also during the Meiji period that a number of samurai-class-originated practices such as arranged marriages, martial arts, the tea ceremony, calligraphy or haiku, came to be adopted by the lower classes (Kobayashi 1994: 49; Martinez 2004: 46). This 'samuraization' of the Meiji period was conducive to the creation of 'national' cultures (Befu 1971: 52). As Hall (1992: 292) argues, "national cultures are a distinctly modern form" even in Western societies, so the sense of nationhood was propagated through the education system, media, the nationalist discourses of militarism and the *ie*, as well as by constructing a selection of 'shared' cultural practices from the Meiji period. These explicitly indicated a gendered yet uniform way to serve the nation.

Today it is a common experience that the nation is situated as a primary unit of collectivity with which people identify. In the post-war period, Japan's relationships to Others have been articulated not through its colonial power but through its economic success (Clammer 2001: 117-118). Whilst distinguishing itself from its Asian neighbours and ethnic difference remaining an integral part of Japanese nationalism, today the omnipresence of Western Otherness and its popularity appear to play a more prominent role in forming a contemporary Japanese national identity. How has this Western-orientated trend been portrayed within the Japanese context? In the post-war era, the generic term 'the West' – *seiyō* – exclusively indicating North America and Europe, was conventionally presumed to indicate American values and the idea of individualism (Kelsky 2001: 6). Much of this image of the West was built on Japan's long-term political, economic and cultural associations with the U.S.A. which had forced Japan to open to trading with the West in 1852. Moreover, the post-war American Occupation in 1945-1952 and the U.S. military control over Okinawa prefecture[3] are of great significance in providing a social model of the West, one which is linked with the concept of "white Westerners" (Creighton 1995: 142-143).

Paralleling the Irish case in which the Japanese fall into an overarching conceptualisation of Others, the representation of *-gaijin* – literally meaning someone from outside, but conventionally the term refers to someone white – easily falls into the

[3] The Okinawa archipelago was politically detached from Japan in 1952 and governed under direct U.S. military control until it was returned to Japan in 1972. Due to this unique past, Okinawa became the first region where people have refused to attain the 'Japaneseness' that the U.S. attempted to impose on them by manifesting their Okinawan identity with "a revival of local consciousness" (Morris-Suzuki 1998: 180-181).

essentialised framework of the 'West', eliminating any diversity amongst the people seen to belong to this category (ibid.: 137). While white foreigners have been considered as "the bearers of highly valued innovation and style," they are also recognised as a "moral threat" (ibid.: 141). *Gaijin* represent "egoism and individualism," both of which are allegedly incompatible with Japanese values, and have been perceived as part of an "intruding outside world"; they are also simultaneously seen as value-free pragmatic agents who are not constrained by ideas about 'what Japanese should not do' (ibid.: 144-145).

This cultural binary of Japan and the West has become a dominant framework for the self-other dichotomy and reflects both Japan's post-war economic growth and increasing soft power. Whilst the Western version of modernity helped shape the discourse of national identity during the Meiji period, post-war Japan began to reformulate this nationalist discourse in an attempt to set itself apart from not only Asia but also from the West. The ethnic and cultural distinctions between Others in relation to which Japaneseness was articulated was reflected in the *nihonjinron* discourse.

The discourse about being Japanese (*nihonjinron*, theories about the Japanese), which flourished during the era of internationalisation in the 1970s and 1980s, has become the foundation of contemporary Japanese national identity. This discourse promulgates Japanese uniqueness and distinctiveness, as well as asserting ethnocentrism and affirming historical continuity in order to create a sense of Japaneseness (Gebhardt 2002; Yoshino 1992). Therefore, it imagines a culturally and ethnically monolithic Japan. Indeed, as with many other nationalistic discourses, the notion of Japaneseness is

a highly politicised concept constructed at different stages of social transformation (Anderson 1991; Hall 1990; Raz 1992). The post-war creation of a monolithic nationalist discourse was similar to the pre-Meiji one but is more dependent on Japan's economic and soft power in the global market.

This postmodern discourse about Japanese homogeneity and ethnic purity developed in tandem with the process of internationalisation (Goodman *et al.* 2003; Morris-Suzuki 1998). Internationalisation has been promoted by the Japanese government from the 1980s and was introduced by former prime minister Nakasone (1982-1987) who highlighted an 'internationalisation policy' (*kokusaika*) as a major governmental direction with the prospect of Japan's becoming a part of the G7 (Burgess 2006). In the face of political and economic changes, Japan strategised to project itself it as "a modern, democratic, non-racist and modest" nation-state (Ichijo 2002: 66). Simultaneously, as characterised in an assertion made by Nakasone, who stated that the "Japanese were…an ethnically homogeneous people," it was during this period that the monolithic stance of the nation-state and people became a popular assumption (Morris-Suzuki 1998: 173). Given Japan's 'isolation' during the Tokugawa era, theories about the authenticity of Japaneseness were often attributed to the assumption that they were a homogeneous race and that they had always been isolated (Sakai 2005: 1-5; see also Kowner 2002; Yoshino 1992). As a result, this stance has reaffirmed ideals of Japanese ethnic purity and homogeneity by neglecting internal ethnic minorities such as the *Ainu*, the *Burakumin* (Neary 2009), Korean forced-labourers brought in throughout the colonisation period, Okinawans or even the *Nikkei-jin*.[4]

[4] As seen amongst the *Nikkei-jin* who are born and raised in the well-established communities such

Moreover, the *nihonjinron* discourse also emphasised the overall efficiency of the group and group consciousness. Groupism is seen to supersede the manifestations of individualism and has been analysed as characteristically Japanese (Clammer 2001: 69-71). Social 'harmony' and the 'efficiency' of the group are seen to be achieved at the expense of individuality. Not only did this discourse come to frame Japanese ideals, but it also worked hand-in-hand with claims of ethnic homogeneity to become a way of accounting for Japan's high cultural level, safety (lower crime rates), the quality of infrastructure services, as well as the economic success that was seen as a post-war moral victory (Yoshino 1992). Morality anchored in a group-oriented consciousness was thought to serve as the background to Japan's post-war advancement. Indeed, morality based on the persistent influence of Confucianism remained the key to an understanding of Japanese society. Van Bremen (1992: 136) argues that particular figures and historical events became the representations of moral orders through the repetitive reproduction and dissemination in the forms of popular texts, literature and school education and that these helped to redress "disparities between ideals and reality, right and wrong, good and bad." The moral code of conduct intertwined with the Confucian belief has retained its hegemonic influence over thought and conduct from the end of the Tokugawa into the post-war periods.

Also, it was since the late 1960s that people started to embrace the idea that the

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as Brazil, their attempts to negotiate their belonging between "sharing the blood" as Japanese and their representation as being culturally "non-Japanese" best exemplify the intricacy of identity issues and become interesting for anthropologists (Carvalho 2003: 197). *Nikkei-jin*'s returnees' presence and that of other ethnic groups in Japan are thought to problematise post-war premises about the allegedly homogeneous nation-state.

economic development that Japan was beginning to experience also had led the society to achieve high levels of class equality. This discourse of a predominantly middle-class society is known as '*ichioku sōchūryū*,' literally 'one million mass middle-class.' Of course, Japanese middle-class is by no means a homogenous group. Whilst class is defined in relation to socio-economic status on the basis of income, occupation and cultural capital, the enlarged middle strata is partly underpinned by a subjective ascription of class (Kanbayashi 2013). Therefore, class identification does not merely signify individuals' actual socio-economic status but also a particular consciousness that reflects one's sense of belonging in society (Olwig 2007: 88-90). Self-identification of a middle-class status also reflects homogenising lifestyles and an equal sense of place in Japanese society. This emerging middle-class Japan as an ideological construct developed hand-in-hand with the post-war images about Japan and its Others (Clammer 2001: 118).

Nihonjinron emerged in response to drastic changes brought by the post-war economic growth and Japan's engagement in the global economy (Kowner 2002; Ivy 1995; McVeigh 1997; Lebra 2004; Yoshino 1992). The resulting rapid urbanisation and fear of losing traditional values (Kowner 2002: 177) in turn facilitated the forging of the "renewed sense of Japanese national pride" which was encapsulated in the discourse (Ivy 1995: 3). Prominent in the period of internationalisation was the acceleration of the dichotomy between the values of Japanese and non-Japanese, as well as the enlargement of the gap between the two under the guise of 'globalising Japan.' Internationalisation is responsible for homogenising the internal/external dichotomy so as to keep Japaneseness intact. Yet, the narratives of *nihonjinron* inherently entail a dialectic

between heterogeneity and homogeneity. Lebra (2004) states:

> In fact, diversity can be recognized only in the context of generality –"Japan" being just such a generality. The issue here is "Japan's' diversity, which does exist and which can be observed, but only *in relation to* uniformity…It is through generalization that the observer is able to penetrate overwhelming diversity and make sense of it (2004: 269, emphasis in original).

Many scholars have paid attention to these competing yet mutually-implicative tendencies of Japanese society; Japan has navigated the dilemma of becoming a culturally modern, technologically advanced society through the processes that invoke 'tradition' (Goldstein-Gidoni 2001; Kuwayama 2004; Miller 1982). In this context, what is relevant to my research is the extent to which this self-portrayal of Japan is tied to the emphasis on tradition in the lives of Japanese people abroad. The traditional way of projecting Japan is not necessarily an external imposition but is often exercised by Japan itself (Creighton 1995). It is because this stance postulates continuity with the past, wherein history acts as a constant reminder of the nation's politico-cultural power and resistance to the Other. Hence, representations of Japanese culture are seen as being untranslatable to others. This kind of "self-exotification" (Goldstein-Gidoni 2001: 84) or "reverse Orientalization" (Miller 1982: 209-211), is understood as a strategic move to help Japan survive modernisation.

Tradition is, in this sense, a loaded term as seen in other nation-states, consciously used to create a socio-political cohesion with reference to a manipulated heritage (Maher 2001: vii). This is where Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983) poignantly conceptualise the interplay between 'invented tradition' and ideology, that is, utilising the past as a set of

fixed practices, implying historical continuity. For them, most traditions are "invented" through "a process of formalization and ritualization" (1983: 4) with "invented practices" that help inculcate vague values such as "patriotism, loyalty, duty" and so on (ibid.: 10). In Chakrabarty's development of their ideas, the process of "traditionalizing" begins to function as "ideology" in times of a society's reformation (Chakrabarty 1998: 287). In the Japanese context, Japanese nationalism speaks of "harmony, beauty, and the spirit of traditional Japaneseness," and can be seen to have emerged as a result of the "anxiety" deriving from drastic, rapid changes in society (ibid.: 294). The construction of a symbolic version of themselves connected to tradition is, then, a strategy to perpetuate common identities: the samurai male and the 'good wife wise mother.'

Here it is also important to note that the development of *nihonjinron* was significantly interrelated with Japan's inability to use pre-war national symbols to promote national unity. Befu (2001) explains that the national symbols that were prominent during the wars fought from the late nineteenth century until 1945, today act as a constant reminder of the past. Typically, the prevailing prototype of Japanese images and the assumptions of *nihonjinron*, subsume contradictory orientations in relation to the national symbols that usually form the basis for delineating national identity. For instance, after the Second World War, the display of the national flag was restricted by the Occupation Forces (2001: 93). The modern reluctant use of the national flag among ordinary Japanese citizens, particularly amongst Okinawans[5] or even in the business scene, occurs amidst the majority sentiment which dislikes the use of these symbols as

[5] Okinawa lost a quarter of its population in ground battles during the Second World War followed by a 17-year-long occupation and a prolonged U.S. military base presence until the present day. There have strong political protests about the national flag and anthem, and the imperial institution (Befu 2001: 89-94).

being the preserve of "ultra-right wing conservatives" (ibid.). Symbols such as the national flag, the national anthem and the royal family that manifest and promote national unity (Ortmann 2009) have lost their power to affirm collective affinity whereas *nihonjinron* discourses have filled the gap in order to manifest a Japanese national identity (Befu 2001: 87). In the absence of these contested symbols, defined as implying the imperial period, Befu explains that post-war *nihonjinron* "entirely" stripped off "the imperial institution and other problematic symbols of national identity associated with the military Japan of the past" (ibid.: 101). Therefore, the modern Japanese ideological discourse with the backdrop of "an ex-imperial, lingering economic…cultural power" presents an unsettling ambivalence about the manifestation of Japaneseness (Iwabuchi 2002: 3).

The narratives of *nihonjinron* were basically channelled not to outsiders but to the Japanese themselves to establish the "implicit patterns" of Japanese orientations (Mouer and Sugimoto 1986: xxvi; Sakai 2005: 9). These concepts gained much support and were utilised not only by intellectuals, but also by business elites who "deal with organizational and crosscultural issues" (Kowner 2002: 177). They became a plausible rationale for advocating Japanese difference against the Other that had always lurked within and outside Japan. Not surprisingly, *nihonjinron* stirred heated debate among scholars, who contested such mythicised Japanese peculiarities (Dale 1986; Yatabe 2003). Sugimoto (1997) poignantly argues that the rhetoric of *nihonjinron* significantly contributes towards disseminating misleading ideas about Japanese society and people as being "a homogeneous, monocultural entity" (1997: 13). Sugimoto contends that the discourse of *nihonjinron* neglects inherent diversities in terms of region, generation,

occupation, education, gender and ethnicity within the nation (ibid.: 5). Having said that, whether or not this discourse is "a mere illusion" (Lebra 2004: 266), the rhetoric of *nihonjinron* fundamentally serves to shape and imprint a national consciousness through the iterative production of such notions by both *nihonjinronists* and anti-*nihonjinronists* (Raz 1992: 125). What is being suggested is, as Yoshino argues, that concepts about Japanese uniqueness are no longer a product exploited by the limited elites but have become important perspectives from which to analyse Japanese culture and people's behaviour systematically (Yoshino 1992: 9). The *nihonjinron* discourse has become deeply entrenched in Japanese popular discourse, and remains central to the construction of an ethnic and national identity.

In the midst of Japan's recovery from the devastation of the war and extraordinary economic growth, we can see that the post-war narrative of Japan as the class-free, ethnically and culturally homogeneous and group-orientated society is a reflection of the state's attempts to inscribe a common sense of nationhood. Although Japan is not ethnically homogenous, given Japanese people are the dominant ethnic group, Japanese ethnic identity and national identity significantly overlap. For this reason, I use the terms Japanese national identity and ethnic identity interchangeably in the analyses of the processes of identity marking of my participants. In the following sections, I will further explore how ideals of stability have been constructed by the state and present the ways in which individual identities have been interwoven into social roles.

Social self: the domains of *uchi*/*ura* and *soto*/*omote*

Before exploring how individual identities are interrelated with ideals of lifestyle stability constructed in the post-war context, it is crucial to pay attention to the relationship between role and identity. The individual develops various roles and identities over the course of his or her life. Strathern and Stewart (1998) review anthropological works engaging in the notions of person, self and individuality that are diversely deployed in various cross-cultural contexts. The differing usages of these terms and their (in)compatibility with local concepts underline the difficulty in defining and distinguishing these notions. In this thesis, I focus on the dimensions of personhood and use them in the Maussian sense. Mauss (1985) distinguishes among the notions of role (*personnage*), the person (*personne*) and the self (*moi*); concepts that he sees as having developed through different historical trajectories in different parts of the world. Mauss's argument demonstrates that whilst all individuals have always had a sense of self, the ways in which a social emphasis is placed on the self differs according to societies. Mauss conceptualises the notion of *personnage* as the fixed role or character played by the individual in a given group and sees it as an important quality that constitutes the person. The person reflects an individual's roles and positions within the group, and is thus culturally specific. The notion of the person that embodies aspects of *personnage* has evolved variously over time through different "systems of law, religion, customs, social structures and mentality" (ibid.:3). Mauss looks at the person as a legal entity endowed with juridical obligation and moral responsibility. This legal and moral perspective of the person established by the Romans and the Greeks evolved, with the influence of Christianity, into the notion of the person as being a metaphysical entity; a sense of being conscious of one's own body, as well as a spiritual and physical individuality. In modern society legal obligations as well as roles that one possesses and

is expected to fulfil, are intricately interwoven, to form a sense of a unitary self and identity. In this understanding, self encompasses dimensions of personhood. Although self and person are inseparable from each other, they are roles which contribute to what it takes to be the person and thus to what determines identities. Personhood encompasses the social realms of the self, integrating roles and identities. As we have seen earlier, identity is not pre-given, but constructed. And this process of becoming is reliant on playing out social roles (Ossewaarde 2007). The individual gains roles and statuses in relations to society over the course of a lifecycle (Griffiths 2016: 195). A sense of self and accompanying identities are constructed through such experiences of social relations to become the person. As Rouse (1995: 358) claims that identity represents a form of personhood, so social identity is essentially linked to collective aspects of the self. All identities that emerge as the product of social interactions, therefore, can be considered as social identity (Jenkins 2004). In this understanding, socialisation processes reflect the ways in which an individual achieves personhood. In other words, personhood is expressed through the ways in which the self is performed in social relationships.

The dimensions of personhood interwoven with roles and identities link to the social self in the Japanese context. Scholars working on the Japanese conception of the social self – the person - argue for the ways in which the distinction between the roles played out in the public and private sphere is made. Much of the analysis is reliant on the Japanese concepts of *uchi*/*soto* (inside/outside) and *omote*/*ura* (front/back) which represent the spatial and emotional boundaries in which one finds oneself (Kondo 1990; Hendry 2003; Nakane 1970). *Uchi*, also the term referring to one's dwelling, is

discussed in association with a high degree of affinity, a sense of belonging, as well as cleanness (Hendry 2003: 47-49), whereas *soto* connotes "the public world" wherein a degree of formality is required (Kondo 1990: 141). Similarly, *omote* sharing the spatial concepts of *soto* denotes a front, surface or anything in the public attention, as opposed to *ura* which corresponds to *uchi* which also connotes the back, reverse side and anything hidden from public attention (McVeigh 1997: 38-40). This dualistic distinction also corresponds to the notions of *tatemae* (public behaviour) and *honne* (one's real feelings) (Hendry 2003), as well as what McVeigh (1997) proposes as the distinction between a 'performed self' and an 'expressed self.'[6]

Within the sociality represented by the concepts of *uchi*/*soto* (inside/outside) and *omote*/*ura* (front/back), 'others' play a role in expressing the social self. McVeigh (ibid.: 57) notes: "The self is a culturally constructed belief system about what it means to be a person in relation to others." He argues that the role of others is fundamentally played by the *seken*. The Kodansha Japanese-English Dictionary (1976) defines *seken* as 'the world,' 'society' and 'the public.' This nuanced notion is seen by McVeigh (19697: 38) as analogous to "*shu-i* (environment, surroundings, neighbourhood)" and by Lebra (1992: 107) as "the generalized audience or jury surrounding the self." Lebra goes on to note that this form of others denotes specifically "one's kindred (outside the immediate family), neighbors, schoolmates, colleagues, clientele, or a large, ill-defined aggregate

[6] Building on Goffman's theory, McVeigh posits two facets of self: the 'expressed self' is a type of self-presentation towards a given group which is "revealed, spontaneous, and charged with personal sentiment" (McVeigh 1997: 41). Whilst this corresponds to *uchi* (inside) and *ura* (back) domains, the 'performed self' is practised in the *soto* (outside) and *omote* (front) spheres wherein one is "concealed, concerned with social priority, and oriented towards non-intimates to perform by the demands of society" (ibid.). He argues that proper attire, speech mannerism, morality, consensus, cooperation and other forms of etiquette remain crucial to delivering the 'performed self' because they signal a degree of formality that one is capable of in the *soto* sphere.

of people, known and unknown to self" (ibid.). Such visible and invisible others operate in a way that requires a person to regulate their behaviour.

The self and others are not oppositional but mutually constitutive, because the recognition of the self emerges at the nexus of otherness, in other words, the "self becomes self only in relation to other" (Lebra 2004: 263). In short, since one cannot be independent of society, the self is always exposed to the eyes of others and is delineated within the context of *seken*. This indicates that the roles articulated in the *soto*/*omote* spheres in turn influence a sense of being *uchi/ura*, so that a sense of self and identity are relationally and continually renewed. Though this mutual influence between public/*soto* and private/*uchi* is by no means unique to Japanese society and is also true of Western contexts (Hendry 1992: 62; Lebra 1992: 107), what is distinctive about Japanese society is the extent to which the self is expected to adhere to these roles. As Mauss (1985) argues for the ways in which different dimensions of the self are seen as important according to societies, so the Japanese give paramount weight to aspects of the *personne* of the self, where one fulfils legal obligations and social expectations, and plays roles according to the context in which one is placed (Hendry 2003: McVeigh 1997; Plath 1983). This tendency is reflected in the idea of groupism (group model) that is conceived of as representing the way the Japanese engage in society. Social roles embodied in personhood significantly influence the experiences of self and the ways in which the individual develops identities.

As noted earlier, the discourse of *nihonjinron* emphasises selfhood as being heavily dependent on social relationships, and thus values these aspects of personhood. For

instance, Doi's (1973) discussion of '*amae*' (dependency) describes relationships as based on the concepts of *giri* and *ninjo*, that is, "social obligation and human feeling" (1973: 23, 33), whereby the repression of the ego is necessary in group-orientated Japanese society. In addition, Nakane (1970) argues that 'vertical relations' are the key characteristic of Japanese social structure. Nakane claims that 'vertical loyalties' delicately constructed by interpersonal ties between superiors and inferiors, are considered to be fundamental to upholding the hierarchical social structure (1970: 25). In this model one's status is fundamentally determined by age or the length of one's membership within a group, and people play specific roles within a given context (Sugimoto 1997: 3). As these theories and the *nihonjinron* discourse rooted in a Confucian morality emphasise a part of the self in relation to rights, legal obligation or moral responsibility, it is evident that the playing out of appropriate social roles is seen as a foundational quality in the understanding of personhood, and ultimately selfhood, in the Japanese context. For this reason, scholarly works on the self in the Japanese context are typically discussed under the popular term of 'the Japanese self.' This concept is used as synonymous with the person, and therefore it should be noted as 'the Japanese personhood.' The concept of 'the Japanese self' should not be confused with being an individual; the idea of 'the Japanese self' is in fact misreading since it assumes that all Japanese people act in a uniform way and its subjectivity is rendered static. Whilst a growing use of the notion of 'the Japanese self' highlights the significance of performing the socially prescribed expectations in both the legal and moral senses in Japanese society, it goes without saying that the self is transformative and that no two individuals have exactly the same sense of self, roles and identities.

Nevertheless, this does not mean that I do not concur with the idea that group consciousness is a fundamental quality for Japanese ideals; it is evident that the popular use of the concept 'the Japanese self' is reflective of the discourse about Japaneseness where roles articulated, particularly in the *soto* sphere, are seen as more important than personal desires. This means that the dimensions of personhood are considerably seen as important. In this regard, education needs to be taken into account as an integral element in the socialisation of individuals. Hendry (1986) discusses the ways in which the child becomes socialised in the *uchi* (home), the neighbourhoods, the kindergarten/day nursery and schools. Adopting the *uchi*/*soto* framework within which the ideas about gendered roles, security, order, morality or cleanliness are explicitly delineated, Hendry demonstrates that the child learns specific role behaviours in relation to the expectations of various types of others. She emphasises that although the mother encourages the child not to lose personal desires in the relationships with others, the learning of self-control is taken as a necessary quality to enter the outside world and thus to become social actors (1986: 83). As the education system is crucial in inculcating individuals with roles to play, gendered ideals are also an important element in defining social roles.

Adulthood, Japanese men and women

How have gendered roles in the *uchi* and *soto* spaces been constructed? The normative life course of Japanese men has been shaped in relation to the hegemonic 'salaryman' masculinity of the middle-class, *ie* ideology, as well as through the notion of adulthood. Kinsella (1995: 242) defines adulthood as not "a source of freedom or independence"

but inversely as "a period of restrictions and hard work" involving responsibility to society, their family and large organisations. Conventionally, the transition to adulthood is marked by various life events such as the acquisition of a full-time job (Kukimoto 2009),[7] marriage (Lebra 1984; Ungruhe 2010) and buying a residence independent of their parents (Newman 2008). The notion of adulthood built around work, marriage and their attendant responsibilities is understood to mean that an adult has the responsibility to fulfil these roles.

Yet, the path to adulthood does not necessarily suggest a linear progression; for instance, people often fluctuate between the roles of student and employee. The transition, therefore, could be at times reversible (Okano 2009). Moreover, post-war Japan has seen a gradual rise in the average age for first marriage for Japanese men from 25.9 in 1950 to 30.8 in 2012 and for women from 26 to 29.2 (Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare of Japan 2012). Late marriage and an increase in the divorce rate are also characteristic of the life courses of contemporary Japanese people (Andressen and Kumagai 1996; Ishida 2013). This phenomenon of late entry into the roles assumed to be the conventional markers of adulthood has been analysed in relation to notions of 'post-adolescence' (Miyamoto 2004) and 'emerging adulthood' (Arnett 2000), which are considered to be a prevailing trend in post-industrial societies (Amit 2011; Newman 2008; Okano 2009).[8] Tanner and Arnett (2011: 15) suggest that emerging adulthood is a

[7] Kukuimoto (2009) makes the claim that the statistics of the Cabinet Office in 2005 show that youths aged between 15 and 30 thought that adulthood began when stable full-time work commenced.

[8] Newman (2008) looks at adulthood in European countries and Japan through exploring the residential (in)dependence of young people aged between 18 and 34. Newman argues for a striking similarity of youths' 'delayed departure' from their natal residence between South European countries and Japan, and suggests that this similarity results from a weak welfare state, high housing

distinctive life stage wherein people seek identity, experience instability, focus on self-development, feel in-between adolescence and adulthood and optimistically believe in many possible life pathways. This suggests that the passage to adulthood is always constructed and that the diverse paths to adulthood per se means becoming an adult is a process (du Bois-Reymond 1998; Kloep and Hendry 2011).

For Japanese men, being an adult is interwoven with post-war notions of masculinity. Middle-class, salaried male workers known as 'salaryman' have been conceptualised as the Japanese masculine norm from the 1950s (Dasgupta 2010; Ishii-Kuntz 2003). The emergence of the term salaryman dates to as far back as 1916, and today the term broadly denotes both white and blue-collar salaried workers (Dasgupta 2010: 192-193). The industrialisation process in post-war Japan, with which the discourse of an omnipresent corporate masculinity developed hand-in-hand, served to articulate a gendered division of labour both in the public and domestic spheres. Ideally men, as salarymen, play the role of the primary financial provider for households and women, as *sengyō shufu* (full-time housewives), stay in the household in charge of household chores and child-rearing (Dasgupta 2010: 192; Hidaka 2010: 2-3). Indeed, politics and the corporate workplace are very gendered and are dominated by men. Thus, it is men who are considered to be situated at the centre of institutional powers in the *soto* domain (Dasgupta 2010: 192).

As much as the hegemonic salaryman masculinity has shaped a large part of Japanese

costs and precarious labour markets in these countries (2008: 646-647). In a similar vein, in her research on *freeter*s, Honda (2005) argues that *freeter*s are "latent objectors to the mainstream structure of Japanese society" (2005: 6) and have come to represent the diverse paths from adolescence to adulthood similar to those in any other post-industrial society (ibid.: 22).

men's gender identity in the post-war period, the *ie* is also an important social establishment through which to enact an individual's life orientation. Confucianist strictures about the family have remained central to understanding the individual's commitments to their *ie* (cf. Watsuji 1961). The Japanese had to wait until the implementation of the post-war constitution of 1947 to obtain legal equality for both men and women. Following Japan's defeat at the end of the Second World War, the reformation of the nation also brought about changes to the laws relating to the *ie*. The new Civil Code, based on U.S. concepts of the conjugal family and egalitarian inheritance, attempted to liberate Japanese from the authority of the family and guaranteed equality between the husband and the wife (Hidaka 2011: 115; Sano 1958: 30). In the face of the democratisation of the nation-state, the *ie* came to be treated as a mere "cultural symbol" so as to preserve the core of Japanese cultural traditions (Ochiai 2000: 106, 114). Simultaneously, however, it could be argued that the reformation of the *ie* was little more than a legal attempt to invert the social ethics that had not changed for centuries. The Confucian notion of filial piety continues to shape Japanese social morality no matter the legal changes in *ie* structure (Hidaka 2011: 115). This indicates that *ie* ideology and other conventional male-dominated institutions continue to put men in a position of authority in both the household and nation-state, and yet at the same time these discourses chain them to institutions.

Whereas the roles of Japanese men derived from the realm of *uchi* are extended out towards the *soto* over a man's life course, the life orientation of a Japanese woman moves in the opposite direction. The construction of women's roles epitomises Japanese historical trajectories. As symbolised by 'the Sun Goddess *Amaterasu*,' the founder of

the Japanese imperial family, or Queen Himiko who was recorded in the third-century Chinese chronicle as the ruler of Yamato kingdom, early chronicles documented that women held high positions in the political and religious terrains (Robins-Mowry 1983: 5-6). Yet, women's possession of religious power within the matriarchal system did not correlate to higher social status than men (Martinez 2004: 43). The documentation of Japanese women's low status dates back to the seventh century (Vavich 1967: 403). Broadly, much of this followed the introduction of the Taihō code (701) creating a patrilineal system based on Confucian ethics interwoven with a long-lasting feudalism (1185-1867); and prevailing Buddhist beliefs that assumed women to be impure beings who hindered men's adherence to religious doctrine (ibid.: 402-403; see also Iwao 1993: 5); also, in Shintoism women were perceived as being unclean (Kurihara 2009); all facilitated to continually relegate women to a socially powerless status. Even though the Meiji period led to women's liberation for the elites, who were emancipated to some extent, women's status persisted in being seen as inferior to men's. As discussed, women's social status reflected in the ideology of 'good wife, wise mother' was acknowledged predominantly in relation to their contribution to the households.

For Japanese women, marriage is considered to be the rite of passage that marks entrance into adult life, i.e., becoming an "*ichininmae*" (Lebra 1984: 78). Given the ideological assumptions about women's roles, women's social standing has been much discussed in terms of "domesticity, inferiority, and seclusion" in opposition to men's counterparts (ibid.: 2). While being *soto* exists as the primary condition of being for a Japanese woman, their life orientation moves from *soto* to *uchi* through marrying into an *ie*. Considering women's opposite vector of life course from men's, it is in marriage

and the securing of the *ie* that women are expected to find their primary roles and personal satisfaction. Indeed, the gendered roles of Japanese women primarily allocated to the domestic domain in fact served to protect and secure Japanese women's status (ibid.: 303, 305). Men working in the *soto* became dependent on women being in charge of *uchi*, leading women to see themselves as being empowered within the *uchi* (Iwao 1993). Therefore, a clear gendered division of labour within the *uchi* and *soto* spaces was maintained within such ideals of an interdependent structure. In this context, marriage had been taken as a pragmatic means to secure financial stability and find an emotional haven, as well as serving to add the social capital necessary to be recognised as adult women (Nakano and Wagatsuma 2004). These discourses about what it means to be a Japanese man or woman speak explicitly to the continuing influence of Confucianism that supersedes the changes of legal status endowed by the new constitution of the Meiji and post-war governments.

Simultaneously, it is important to stress that whilst these Japanese and gendered ideals and roles are socially generated, it is only by fulfilling these roles that one is able to identify as an adult, man, woman and Japanese. Because the extent to which individuals embody and act upon the norms of the outside world varies depending on the individual, a becoming process inevitably involves the awareness and acquisition of roles, through which identities are crafted. In order to understand this process better, I adopt the notion of bio-power conceptualised by Foucault (1978). Foucault's notion of bio-power represents a form of power that operates to administrate a life in modern capitalism. Contrasted with sovereign power's mechanism which is characterised as an asymmetric power relation between the state and population as a way of controlling society,

bio-power functions to exercise its influence over the two, which act upon one another in order to regulate action and behaviour through the management of the social body. Within the social mechanism where individuals shape and are being shaped by a structure, bio-power is entangled with the development of various forms of capital (Foucault 1978: 135-145).

Bourdieu (1986) accounts for the structure of a social world in which various forms of symbolic capital are acquired, exchanged and transmitted to succeeding generations. He argues that economic capital is transformable into non-economic forms of capital; one such example is social capital represented as "the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition – or in other words, to membership in a group" (1986: 248). Social capital is defined by its relationship to social networks wherein the individual benefits from collectively-owned cultural and economic capital but simultaneously needs to be committed to the network of relationships morally and legally. Another is cultural capital: cultural capital can be measured by its institutionalised state like educational credentials, as well as in the form of objectified material objects that one possesses. But knowledge, skills, attitudes, tastes, aesthetics and other forms of cultural competence become eventually integrated into the individual and their habitus (ibid.: 244-245). The concept of habitus encompasses "systems of durable, transposable *dispositions*, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures" (Bourdieu 1977: 72, emphasis in original). Habitus represents regulated and reflexive practices and structures. For Bourdieu, the body is not merely a physical object but is also a transmitter of information, actively performing the

embedded values and notions within, because the immanent structure of habitus is "bi-directional, both affected by external stimuli in the performance of bodily practice and informing the ideology and social values generating human behaviour" (Lee 2000: 205). And in the formation of habitus, habitus intersects with capital. The cultural capital possessed by the family plays a fundamental role in transmitting and reproducing it (Bourdieu 1986: 244).

These forms of capital have always been entangled with migration processes. Migration has played a central role in the rise of the capitalist system. Whilst migration is by no means a new phenomenon, it has been central to the processes of modernisation and industrialisation of Western Europe since the seventeenth century (Castles and Miller 2003: 50). Rooted in European colonialism and its expropriation of resources (Castles 2013: 128), labour migration as a result of economic disparities between the Global South and North, has been characterised as an important facet of migration forms. Since the late 1970s global human mobility inherent in neo-liberal capitalism has accelerated migration flows from less-developed countries to more-developed countries in order to meet the high demand for labour created in industrial economies (ibid.: 123-125). Yet, people who are involved in cross-border movements are not only labour migrants but have various statuses such as refugees, asylum seekers, professionals, students or partners of foreign nationals. Migrations, whether forced or voluntary, result from diverse political and economic reasons, ranging from lack of human security to the desire for improved livelihoods by gaining a desirable working lifestyle and seeking educational opportunities (ibid.: 125-127). Correspondingly, flows of people are no longer simply defined as movements from peripheries to centres.

Nevertheless, the centralisation of capital in certain sectors and key global regions is predominant and conducive to an increase in inequality of wealth and power (Glick Schiller *et al*. 1995: 50). Access to the rights and opportunities of mobility is unevenly granted, reflecting the economic and political interests of migrant-receiving countries. Migrant flows across national borders inevitably lead to defining who are desirable and who are unwanted migrants from the perspectives of national security and the domestic labour market (Castles 2013: 130-132). Considering that the global disparities of incomes, development or state power shape the directions and patters of migration flows, there is a need for greater global governance that analyses migration processes and protects the rights of migrants (Koser 2010). In this way, migration in all its forms is firmly integrated into the system of the global political economy.

Capital accumulation has depended on migration in various ways. The technological advancement in electronic communications and travel has enabled people to develop cultural imaginations of a particular place and lifestyle, which work towards gearing migration for further improvement of their cultural capital. The capital that migrants possess is carried into new social relations of production in the destination society where they are also able to increase social capital amongst members of their communities and families (Castles 2013: 127-128). The various forms of their capital are reconstituted through a set of social relations in the destination society. Also, capital exchanged within transnational networks via remittances or a migrant labour force serves towards restructuring the societies of settlement and origin, contributing to the capital accumulation of a specific locality and to its transnational transformation (Glick

Schiller 2009). Therefore, resulting social transformations brought about by the flows of financial and human capital in both societies reflect the important intersection of migration and the socio-economic development of society (Canterbury 2012). Development processes of society and migration work hand-in-hand to accumulate capital collectively and territorially.[9] Simultaneously, flexible global human mobility has increasingly allowed for the accumulation of capital for individual interests, thus leading to an individual-based process of capital accumulation.

In Foucault's discussion, various forms of capital, both individual and collective capital, are produced through the exercise of bio-power which is present at every level of the social body (ibid.: 141). In relation to the Japanese context, education, family as well as *seken* are considered to work as a type of bio-power, through which social relations are sustained and reproduced; bio-power arising from these institutions continuously acts to reproduce a collective subjectivity for capitalism and yet, simultaneously leads to the reproduction of the system of classification such as class and gender differences. Hendry notes that as various socio-economic factors influence the egalitarian nature immanent in the education system (2003: 88), people strive to accumulate the various forms of capital through engaging in a wide range of activities within the structures of Japanese society. For instance, adding extra hours of study in a private tutorial school to the uniformity of education experience has been a common strategy amongst families with school-aged children (White 1992: 48-50). The production of capital through the education system ensures that students become "a well-educated and hardworking labor force" in the future (ibid.: 45) and contribute to state capital. At a time in which

[9] For instance, development processes were tied to colonialism that produced nationally-accumulated capital (Glick Schiller 2009: 18).

Japanese society has become increasingly meritocratic and flexible global human mobility has increasingly allowed for accumulating capital for individual interests, how is this tendency interrelated with a sense of personal fulfilment within Japanese society and recent migration?

Changes in *ikigai* – the sense of self-fulfilment

Ikigai is a modern construct. The term *ikigai* translates as 'a life worth living' (Kodansha 1976).[10] It is a term that has been given currency since the modern era and its discourse became popular in Japan from the late 1960s in response to changing lifestyles brought about by Japan's post-war economic growth (Kanda 2011: 111-112). The term *ikigai* that had been defined as 'the outcome of making a life' in the dictionaries published between the Meiji period and the end of the Second World War began to reflect personal emotions and an evaluation of life courses (ibid.: 114-116). Given this, the notion of *ikigai* is closely linked to a sense of personal satisfaction. In a sense, bio-power defines the degree to which roles that the self is expected to participate in role playing. However, the fulfilment of the self began to be sought beyond the ideal social expectations of men and women. In contemporary Japan, ideals underpinned by social roles are not only desired but also defied.

Diverse attitudes towards self-fulfilment have become discernible. Whilst the normative idea of Japanese men's life course is closely intertwined with the salaryman model of

[10] Mathews (2003: 109) describes *ikigai* as self-fulfilment – "that which most makes life worth living." This way of putting it appears to be employed the most amongst scholars in Japanese studies.

adulthood and a sense of responsibility to their *ie*, Japanese men's association with work and family has changed over the decades. For example, in Hidaka's (2010) exploration of changes in Japanese men's *ikigai* across three generations, she argues that although the hegemonic masculinity of Japanese salaryman has been invariably and essentially constructed on the basis of their work and their sense of responsibility as breadwinners, Japanese men have shifted their priorities from work to family.[11] In addition, Hidaka argues that youths who entered employment around the time of the bursting of the economic bubble tended to find their a sense of fulfilment primarily in work, yet considered their work as a practical expedient to maximise their personal goals and attain a good lifestyle (2010: 137-147). The generational shift in the orientation of *ikigai* from work and family to individual self-fulfilment is not unique to Japan but can be found in other post-industrial societies (Mathews 2003: 113, 118-123). Also, in recent years, the salaryman model of adulthood has come to be seen as a questionable socialisation process (Newman 2008). Much of this stems from the fact that the post-war work ethic has been identified as one of the major issues implicated in overwork-related deaths which started to become prominent in the 1970s (Andressen and Kumagai 1996: 3; Gill 2003: 158; Hidaka 2010: 7); mental illnesses such as depression; or for the father's absence in households (Ishii-Kuntz 2003; Mathews 2003). These issues are not limited to middle-aged business men but are seen to widely affect

[11] In conjunction with the government's policies aimed at redressing the ageing population and low birth-rate (Cook 2009: 58), it was also during this period that there began a shift towards family and work. Marked by the emergence of 'New Men (*shinjinrui*),' a concept that became prominent in the late 1960s (Miyanaga 2004: 71), Japanese men were notionally encouraged to be more family-oriented than work committed. In stark contrast to the earlier generation who entered the workforce in the 1960s and 1970s and were significantly incorporated into the tide of post-war economic development, New Men were at the time depicted as "situation, reactive instead of responsive and responsible, noncommittal, easily hurt, sensitive, and withdrawn" (Hidaka 2010: 74) due to their actively taking on the domestic roles of father and husband (Cook 2009: 58). Within the transition of the social normative model of manhood, the questioning of the "old ideology" that emphasised loyalty to work was the salient characteristics of the period (Miyanaga 2004).

all males.

Similarly, the desire for self-fulfilment for Japanese women and the process of internationalisation show a corresponding shift. Internationalisation facilitated the transformation of the role of Japanese women from its more 'traditional' pattern to one in which women were more individual-orientated, career-seeking and married later in life (Kelsky 2001: 2). In the wake of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women that Japan ratified in 1980, equality as to recruitment, promotion and training resulted in Japan's Equal Employment Opportunity Law being implemented in 1986 (Creighton 1996: 192; Roberts 1994: 3). In accordance with increased educational opportunities for women and a tendency towards late marriage which have contributed to improving women's labour force participation, women's roles, particularly amongst urban middle-class women, have become associated with ones outside of the household and they have started to question the "backward and "oppressive" Japanese employment and domestic structures in which women are expected to fulfil subordinate roles (Kelsky 2001: 3). The marriage of the Crown Prince in 1993 with a woman who had been educated in the West and worked for the Foreign Ministry epitomised Japanese women's better engagement with the *soto* sphere. Stefánsson (1998) sees this event as symbolic of the empowerment of Japanese women connecting the inside (imperial family) to the outside world of ordinary people. In this way, women have begun to embrace a flexibility in the way they engage in the *soto* sphere.

It is also since the 1980s that Japan has witnessed an ever-increasing trend for Japanese

women to travel overseas (Ichimoto 2004; Nitta 1998). At the turn of the twenty-first century, Japanese women have begun to dominate in both categories of long term residents and permanent residents (White 2003: 84). For the Japanese, affiliations with Western countries have been more favoured than the neighbouring Asian countries since the 1980s (White 2006). International travel to the West is taken by those who yearn for "the benefits of personal *kokusaika* (internationalisation)" (White 2003: 96). Japanese women's desire for contact with the West also extends to romantic relationships with Western men. For instance, the phenomenon known as 'yellow cab,' implying a relationship with the convenience of a taxi ride, caught media attention between the late 1980s and early 1990s. It characterised Japanese middle-class women's seeking out sexual engagement with white and black men in Western metropolitan cities or the U.S. military bases in Japan (Kelsky 2006: 134; Takahashi 2013: 5). In Western societies the Asian body has long been seen as a sexual object and thus a sexual relationship with a Western man is often taken as a strategy by Japanese women to access a Western version of cultural modernity and exoticism. Kelsky (2001) states that women's desire to be affiliated with white men also works for men who employ interracial intimacy as a way of rejecting the racial hierarchy that exists in the West. Her study explores how such "*representations* of interracial romance as a symbol of redemptive pluralism and solution to the problem of Japanese sexism and insularity are recirculated back to Japan" (2001: 230, emphasis in original). Interracial intimacy is then an expression of cosmopolitanism. In a similar vein, in her analysis of Japanese women in Australia, Kawashima (2012) looks at the ways in which Japanese female working holiday makers are empowered within a particular racial hierarchy. She argues that Australian men's sexual interest in Japanese women often results in not only elevating the women's social

position in the local context but also subverting the gender hierarchy between Japanese men and women. Within this power hierarchy of "the dominant West and feminised Asia" (2012: 1), an affiliation with Western men is typically desired in order to satisfy Japanese women's aspiration for Western culture and in order to avoid the need to return to Japan. Japanese women's Occidental longings, combined with patriarchal Japanese institutions and racial stereotypes of Asian men in the West, underpin women's pursuit of a better social standing and emancipation from Japanese gender relations. Therefore, women's desire for career advancement (Habu 2000) and a resistance to the persistent gender discrimination in the workplace (Kelsky 2008) are often expressed through the practice of global movement.

Simultaneously, whilst Japanese women have benefited from the wave of internationalisation and have become the bearers of new values and ways of life, values relating to the normative allegiances that women were supposed to have to society, family and jobs have become polarised.[12] Iwao (1993) wrote 20 years ago about Japanese women's self-reliance, wherein marriage was no longer perceived as the primary way to certify women's capacity to engage in and contribute to society. The women over 30, in particular, whom Iwao studied, saw marriage as less of an important element in their lives, while they simultaneously lamented that the perceived norms about marriage had not yet essentially changed (1993: 59-63). Two decades later, the

[12] In his study on young Japanese women at a junior college, McVeigh (1997) examines the structural dynamic within which femininity is formalised through rituals. He argues that there exists a paradoxical framework wherein college women undergo socialisation processes as 'Japanese women' in the name of internationalisation. A constant exposure to foreignness also mirrors their modes of Japaneseness and thus reinforces the ideals of Japanese femininity. Therefore, foreign women are seen as being associated with the idea of "liberation" and "assertiveness," and by extension "freedom," as well as having "non-Japanese versions of femininity" (1997: 83). In short, internationalism and the construction of Japanese feminine ideals are mutually fashioned.

way in which women engage in the idea of marriage has become even more polarised.

A 2012 government report revealed that since 2000 there has been a backlash in which Japanese young women aspire to the life of a *sengyō shufu*. The increase in the number of people in their twenties who valued a clear division of labour, that is, men working in the company as the primary income earner and women committed to the roles associated with the household, was attributed to the continuing recession (Asahi Shinbun December 15th 2012).[13] That marriage nonetheless continues to play a hegemonic role in affecting women's life courses works hand-in-hand with the ways that women engage in society as a labour force. The English-derived coinage 'office lady,' commonly referred to as 'OL,' denotes female office workers. Having emerged in 1963 as the replacement for the expression 'business girl' that had been used since the late 1950s, OL has come to represent the temporary workforce engaged in clerical jobs before early retirement upon marriage (Ogasawara 1998: 23-24). In 1995 one third of women in the workforce were engaged in clerical jobs (ibid.: 19), and this percentage remained similar (29.2 per cent) in 2012 (Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare 2012). In contrast, the percentage of women in professional and technical occupation was 18.3 per cent, and that of women in managerial position was as small as 11 per cent as opposed to men at 89 per cent (Gender Equality Bureau of the Cabinet Office 2012). It follows that OLs are still the dominant work style amongst women, and what is more, that Japanese women essentially have few career prospects. A level of career stability with white-collar career prospects equal to those of men is not expected because the

[13] Nihonkeizai Shinbun (December 15th 2012) argued that the tendency towards valuing family bonds was significantly affected by The Great East Japan Earthquake that had occurred the previous year.

working life of women is naturally thought to cease or be interrupted around marriage

Having said that, the popular belief that women should leave the workplace upon marrying or having a first child and becoming the carer of the household is indeed a post-war notion of middle-class womanhood (Roberts 1994; Ueno 1987). Despite the assumption that marriage is a way to live through the financial uncertainty created by the Japanese employment structure, many women in fact cannot afford to become full-time housewives upon marriage and continue to work even after marriage: since the 1940s women's domestic power as full-time housewives has constituted only half of the labour force of married women of the age group between 15 and 64 (Shiobara 2004: 171). A 2011 government report revealed that 56.4 per cent of women opted to continue in the same job after marriage; and that 42.5 per cent of married women stayed on in their jobs after having their first child; and thus women have tended to re-enter the labour market after marriage, mostly as part-time workers in order to have a middle-class lifestyle (Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare 2011).

Whilst these figures reflect women's continued engagement with jobs throughout life and suggest that marriage does not necessarily ensure financial security, the importance of marriage is seen in the recent term '*makeinu*' (loser dog) coined by Junko Sakai in her best-selling book, *The Howl of the Loser Dogs* (Makeinu no Tōboe) (2003) which quickly became well accepted as a catchy concept. Sakai's book presents the binary classification of Japanese women into 'winners' for those who are married and 'losers' for those who are not. Such a simplistic way of defining women's hierarchy within Japanese society has received no small amount of critical response. This notion,

however, also represents women's desire for marriage and articulates common latent anxieties about living with uncertainty. The use of the term *makeinu* in post-bubble Japan has seen a growing focus in the media, the corporate sector and the government when looking at women's role in domestic labour (Goldstein-Gidoni 2012: 203-212). Through the iterative production of the traditional image of Japanese women which accentuates the importance of women's roles in marriage, gender stratification practised in various social establishments continues to articulate women's role as being a domestic one, thereby accelerating the polarising of the view about what it means to be a woman in the face of the contemporary diversification of lifestyles.[14] Thus, women's desire to pursue their self-fulfilment has, if not a new phenomenon, involved a shift between the *soto* and *uchi* boundaries whereby women no longer seek their fulfilment within the household and marriage.

Japan as the world's third largest economy is able to guarantee subsistence and people today embrace a high standard of living. However, there has been a tendency to think that amid the prolonged economic recession, working faithfully for a company is no longer seen as a secure survival strategy for men, as marriage is for women. The Japanese who question living in compliance with social ideals are now in search of *ikigai*. My participants who were in their late twenties and above, were of the age group commonly called the 'lost generation' in post-war Japan, born between 1973 and 1982 (Asahi Shinbun 2007). Younger participants belonging to the 'post-lost generation'[15]

[14] A number of '*mama-san tarento*'(mother personalities) have risen to public prominence in recent years. The omnipresence of those women in the mass media could be seen as one signifier of the recent trend that heavily emphasises women's traditional roles in the household.

[15] The post-bubble in the 1990s has been labelled the 'lost decade' by the mass media (Genda 2005: x; Okano 2009: 2).

are now faced with an 'ultra ice age'[16] in the job market (Cassegård 2014). These are the two generations that have profoundly been affected by drastic social changes in employment structures resulting from a prolonged period of economic stagnation after the 1990's bursting of the economic bubble.

Japan's economic downturn saw a reform of the labour market from the mid-1990s onwards (Cassegård 2014: 29), resulting in changes in corporate culture represented by a decrease in employers offering seniority-based lifetime employment. Consequently, large corporations have started to reduce the recruitment of new graduates and have sought alternative forms of manpower to fill the workforce needs (Matsumiya 2006: 203). Although the lifetime employment system was fundamentally limited to a small cadre of male workers in large corporations and is now significantly crumbling, these changes in the economic landscape have had significant ramifications for Japanese youths, resulting in various employment statuses such as: *haken* (temporary workers), *keiyaku-shain* (full-time workers on fixed contracts), and *freeter* (a Japanese neologism created from the English word 'free' and the German word 'albeiter [=labourer]' referring to those who work on a part-time basis). The proliferation of the number of Japanese youths working outside of regular employment has resulted in a negative outlook on the part of young graduates about the future, as well as a pervading sense of financial insecurity amongst Japanese young people (Genda 2005: 51-72). One

[16] The post-bubble recession is described as an 'ice age of employment' in which people of the lost generation were faced with the dismantlement of the conventional employment structures and the resulting lack of prospects for upward mobility. It was also during this period that the Japanese experienced a decline in living standards for the first time in post-war Japan (Cassegård 2014: 28).

prominent consequence of such economic change is the omnipresence of the *freeter*.[17] Though the paths to becoming a *freeter* among youths vary according to region and class (Hori 2009), as well as to whether it is a voluntary choice or simply the result of the failure to find employment (Genda 2005: 64-65), a *freeter*'s flexible lifestyle has acted as the backdrop for the creation of the idea that the transition from financially dependent adolescents to young adulthood need not follow the conventional middle-class career path (Kukimoto 2009; Miyamoto 2004). Simultaneously, the significance of the increase in the number of youths not entering regular employment is seen as being symbolic of the deterioration of male middle-class values (Cassegård 2014: 30). *Freeters* embracing diverse working styles while simultaneously living on lower salaries and with financial insecurity, have become symbolic figures for young people, who yearn for an independent profession regardless of gender (Hori 2009: 187; Mathews 2004: 128).[18]

However in Japanese society, mobile Japanese youths as well as the concept of mobility itself, are seen as asocial and irresponsible. For example in recent years, those who deviate from the mainstream are largely seen as problematic youths, showing their

[17] The term *freeter*, which appeared in the late 1980s, is an overarching concept but it broadly denotes populations aged between 15 and 34, exclusive of housewives and students, working on a part-time basis (Kosugi 2003: 3). Under a broader definition of *freeter*, several institutions report its numbers differently according to its definition. To use the statistics of Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, the number of *freeter* was reported at 1.51 million in 1997 (see also Genda 2005: 51). After its number increased to as many as 2.17 million in 2003, the *freeter* population steadily declined to 1.76 in 2011 (Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare).

[18] At the same time, particularly after 2000, *freeter* encapsulates stigmatised youths who wish to become regular employees yet are unable to find jobs amid the prolonged recession (Kosugi 2003; 2009). The scarcity of job opportunities is particularly salient outside of urban areas, which works as a determinant factor for youths to become *freeter*s. In contrast, youths residing in cities with fertile opportunities tend to perceive a path to being a *freeter* as one of a number of options entering into society (Matumiya 2006: 30-31).

reluctance to participate in society by becoming a *freeter*, a NEET, a parasite single (singles living at ease at their parents' houses without financial contribution to their house), or a *hikikomori* (socially withdrawn youth) (Horiguchi 2011). These are contentious issues for contemporary Japanese society. These young people have been at times depicted in popular discourse as antithetical to social norms, failing to fulfil a productive and responsible social role in Japanese society (Cook 2009; Okano 2009). Despite the fact that the emergence of these youths is fundamentally the result of the precarious socio-economic situation, the earlier generations' turn to "a moral narrative of blame" that sees post-war affluence as having led to the decline in a strong work ethic and to youths' self-centred life orientation is interesting (Genda 2005; Mathews 2004; Newman 2008). Even if these youths have been morally accepted as an integral part of the social establishment, their apparent deviance, particularly that of men, nonetheless poses a question about their abilities and failure to fulfil societal expectations.

Such lifestyle away from ideals of stability is seen as being problematic and is often discussed in terms of selfish individualism for failing to play stable social roles. But simultaneously, it is perceived as an expression of individuality, since the pursuit of self-actualisation is seemingly incompatible with the allegedly Japanese ideal of groupism wherein individuals are expected to subjugate themselves to the roles and constraints of social relations (Hendry 1992: 68). The notions of individualism and collectivism are entangled within the West/Japan dichotomy. As briefly touched upon earlier, it has been argued that in Japanese society roles assigned to people within the *uchi* and *soto* spheres are delineated so explicitly that conforming to expectations of

others and *seken* are seen as essential markers of maturity. Hendry (ibid) suggests that interpersonal relationships embedded within the spatial distinction are interwoven into a Japanese interpretation of the Western notion of individualism. The idea of Western individualism employed as a dynamic force for the modernisation of the Western world and functioning as an American political ideology to confront fascism, signified the West's superiority over Japan (Takano and Osaka 1997: 320). Western individualism has been contrasted starkly with the allegedly Japanese cultural quality of groupism. The idea of self-sacrifice in the interest of a collective unity entailed in the discourse of groupism has successfully become a central notion to post-war Japan's modernisation (Goodman *et al*. 2003: 2-3). The self-assertive aspect of Western individualism connotes selfishness and immaturity in a Japanese sense and thereby the dichotomy between Japan as collectivistic and the West as individualistic is enacted as a way of claiming Japan's uniqueness (ibid.: 56-65). Though the pressure to conform to social expectations is often portrayed as something depriving individuals of their freedom or as leading to a lack of choice (ibid.: 64), groupism is seen as the essential quality of Japan's civilisation., In this understanding, a sense of *ikigai* is considered as synonymous with a sense of being *uchi* and expressing *honne* as opposed to fulfilling the roles of *soto* and behaving *tatemae*; only by subjugating one's sense of *uchi* and conforming to *soto*'s expectations, can one attain maturity. For this reason, being individualistic has increasingly become associated with the idea of immaturity. Undergoing hardship is perceived to be a key to mature selfhood (Kondo 1990). The idea that the self should be disciplined and strengthened by cultivating a spirit of perseverance, endurance and effort so that one becomes less self-centred has become a moral discourse which places the self in relation to others (ibid.: 108-113). As the self is an integral part of society, it

is considered to be of great importance for the self to attend to social contexts and be a responsible social actor. Thus, there has arisen the assumption that one's personal sense of satisfaction fundamentally stems from the contentment derived from fulfilling legal and moral obligations as responsible adults. Whilst this idea continues to exercise a hegemonic role in determining one's life course, what can be suggested is that, as represented by *freeters*, a sense of *ikigai* does not necessarily lie in a stable, middle-class lifestyle. In the next section, I will examine how shifts in attitudes to work, family and self-fulfilment have affected the transnational mobility of Japanese people.

Post-war Japanese migration

Despite the fact that Japanese migration has a 150-year history, it is a little known fact that this history developed hand-in-hand with the expansion for economic opportunities and engagement in global politics from the end of the nineteenth century. The Japanese diaspora began with ethnic dispersion in the period of cultural contact during the Meiji era (Adachi 2006: 31). Countries such as Brazil, Mexico, Canada and Australia were also destinations for those who sought opportunities as economic migrants (Castles and Miller 2003: 155). This mobility subsequently led to chain migration and the migrants, and their foreign born descendants, today are defined as *Nikkei-jin* (日系人, people of Japanese descent), with an estimated population of three million people (Adachi 2006: 1). Whilst Japan had exported its labour force until the mid-1970s, Japanese colonialism also played a major part in generating massive migration flows to East and Southeast Asia (Goodman *et al*. 2003: 3). Japan's industrialisation and modernisation processes were paralleled by the outflow of a certain class of Japanese to foreign countries: many

students and intellectuals were sent to Western countries to learn about Western technology and political institutions (Ikegami 1995: 365-366). As Japanese territorial expansion into East Asia, Southeast Asia and the Pacific proceeded, a number of farmers and elites began to travel to Japan's new colonies as settlers and colonial administrators. This mode of mobility of the Japanese contrasts starkly with that of the 1970s onwards which is linked to not only seeking economic but also cultural capital.

Japan's engagement in the global capitalist economy increasingly played a vital role in creating new demographics of Japanese abroad.[19] In accordance with the domestic economic boom since the 1960s, Japan saw the abolition of Japanese Yen restrictions against the U.S. Dollar, the increased outflow of Japanese capital especially to the Asian regions from the early 1970s, the high rate of Japanese Yen in the late 1980s, as well as a rise in labour cost domestically (Morris-Suzuki 1998: 175; Nagatani and Tanaka 1998: 1; Sakai 2000: 6). All of this contributed to accelerating the influx of Japanese business elites engaging in global industries (Glebe 2003: 100; Skeldon 1992: 42-43). However, the post-war migration that was initially led by male workers of Japanese corporations has now extended its demographics. In accordance with the diverse models in Japanese migration over a few decades, recent scholarly attention in Japanese migration studies that had focused on the economic globalisation dominated by male

[19] Due to domestic economic development, there was a tremendous decline in the number of Japanese migrants moving to major destination countries such as the U.S., Canada and Australia during the 1960s and 1970s. In spite of governmental encouragement of migration, the post-war economic development in Japan created stagnant outflows of human mobility. Also, the growth of economic opportunities and Japanese women's better educational opportunities created labour shortage since the mid-1980s. This labour gap was filled mostly by foreign workers from the Philippines, Thailand, Pakistan and Bangladesh who worked in the construction and factory sectors. Despite the growth in the number of these workers taking up unwanted jobs, the Japanese government tightened restriction on incoming migrants in 1989 with revisions to the Immigration Control Act, leading to a decline in foreigners with the exception of unskilled *Nikkei-jin* (Castles and Miller 2003: 155-164).

transferees (White 2003) or their corporate culture (Sakai 2000), has refocused on a wider range of Japanese populations abroad such as expatriates' wives (Kurotani 2005; Martin 2006), retiree generations who live their 'second-life' in North America, Oceania and Southeast Asian countries (Ono 2010; Thang *et al*. 2012), as well as students' experiences in Western higher education (Andressen and Kumagai 1996; Habu 2000; Ichimoto 2004; Matsui 1995). This shift in focus from the economic aspects of migration practices to cultural engagement represents the recent diverse forms of Japanese transnational mobility. Though transnational flows of Japanese have a constant relation to the economic conditions, the primary difference between pre and post-war movement lies in the fact that Japan's post-war economic success has principally made transnational mobility open to anyone who can afford to be a migrant.

Given these changes in the nature of migration, the extent to which the terms migrant (*immin*) and migration (*ijū*) appropriately represent recent patterns of migration needs to be considered. Reflecting on the implications of the term migrant, there have been scholarly attempts to distinguish the nature of the global movement of Japanese people. Machimura (2003) emphasises that, with the designation of *immin* (migrant) and *hi-immin* (non-migrant) institutionalised in 1908, the post-war transnational migration is non-economic migration in nature and that those engaged in global mobility are therefore largely *hi-immin* (non-migrant) in light of the fact that its demographic consists of not only expatriates sent abroad by companies but also students or professionals (2003: 147-148). In this conceptual framework, even expatriates engaging in economic activities are considered to be precursors of *hi-immin* demographics. This classification reflects the prevailing idea that Japanese migration has moved away from

the mobility patterns of a particular class which predominantly characterised the pre-war paradigm of transnational migration to a more generalised model of human global mobility which does not necessarily involve the intention of gaining economic benefits. This phenomenon distinctively contrasts with the pre-war movement and has resulted in the presumption that the term *immin* has come to be profoundly associated with economic workers. Interestingly, I found that none of the Japanese people whom I encountered during my fieldwork in Dublin used the term migrant (*immin*) or any alternative term to refer to themselves. Given the fact that academic or political labels do not always match individuals' self-descriptions, it is important for an anthropologist to also take such self-descriptions into account. Much of the absence of the use of the term *immin* in their narratives is precisely due to the economic implications of the terms migrant (*immin*) and migration (*ijū*) in the context of post-war Japanese migration. Then, what are scholarly understandings of the notion of migrant?

Various concepts of migrant

Contemporary times are characterised by the increased movements and exchanges of capital, resources, ideas, information and people, which has stimulated diverse research agendas for researchers of mobilities. The notion of mobility that is defined by Cattan (2008: 86) as "displacement, in real space or in virtual space, of people and objects," is employed to analyse the meanings of social fluidity (Kaufmann 2002; Urry 2000). Mobility indicates not only movement in geographical space but also in social space, and mobility appears as particular set of spatio-temporal relations in which social meanings are produced as a form of power (Tanaka 2013: 3-4). Mobility also generates

transformations and liminality (Cattan 2008: 86), which is often analysed within the dichotomy between sedentary and nomadic accounts of social relations (Cresswell 2006; Kaufman 2002). Yet, as Tanaka (2013: 13-14) argues, there is a growing ambiguity between mobility and sedentism because the patterns and cycles of daily life within sedentary spaces have expanded extensively, and the domain of mobility has become multitiered. It is within this paradigm of mobilities that migration addresses the processes by which individuals move across societies and nation-states.

Migration indeed embodies both nomadic and sedentary characteristics in its practice. In response to the diversifying modes and patterns of mobility, contemporary times have witnessed the erosion of the fixed idea of migration. Correspondingly, the presumed interchangeable nature of the terms 'immigrant' and 'migrant' is worth considering in light of what capacities the two terms have to understand the experiences of migration. Here, in order to capture the nature of the migration experiences of my participants, I want to present several concepts concerning 'the migrant' and migration that can shed light on understanding contemporary migration practices.

Migration accelerated by globalisation has created an upsurge in the attention paid to the effects of the processes wrought by people's movement. The people involved in migration are fundamentally caught up in a unique tempo-spatial rupture. This liminality created through a separation from everyday routines reveals the migrant's complex relations to space and time. Migration studies have been shaped around the premise that migration involves the processes of spatial movements of people between societies in order to settle. Migration brings about (re)construction of identities, since

the migrant loses and gains various roles and statuses throughout his or her migration experiences. Such transformative processes of identification help account for the impact that migration has on identity construction. Central to the migrant experience is a dislocation from home. The displacement of people from home and the re-embeddedness in a new social context were analysed in terms of settlement from the viewpoint of the host society. The heart of the migration discourses therefore addressed a set of issues related to assimilation and integration of those who came into a host society. Those who relocated to a society other than their own were considered to be uprooted, despite evidence of their sustained transnational social networks to homeland (Glick Schiller *et al*. 1995: 48). These 'immigrants' were never fully assimilated into the host society (Adachi 2006: 3). In the context of the U.S.A. their transnational connections to home were fundamentally overlooked, or negatively documented, in this body of scholarship until recently, since such a relation to multiple societies was questioned by the public as a negative characteristic hindering their allegiance to the nation-state and incorporating processes of the society (ibid.: 51-52; Rouse 1995: 353-354). An identification with a single nation-state, her history and culture was considered as an important part of the narratives of nation-states (Glick Schiller 2009: 18). This perspective of the migrant experience facilitated a theoretical framework in which to analyse the relationship between those who moved and the host society.

The individual who comes from a different society exists as the Other in the host society. The notion of 'the Stranger' conceptualised by Simmel (1908/1950) lays a foundational perspective on Otherness that is useful in understanding the Other's membership in a society. Simmel postulates the Stranger as a social type whose spatial and emotional

relations to different ethnic groups in a given context are characterised by both social nearness and distance. The Stranger, he argues, is the potential wanderer "who comes today and stays tomorrow" (1950: 402). Whilst being settled in a particular spatial group, the Stranger does not initially belong to it. Thus the positionality of the Stranger is fixed as that of an outsider. Simultaneously, the Stranger's marginality plays an integral part in constituting the dominant group. Possessing the competing orientations of settlement and mobility, the Stranger is both "near and far *at the same time*" (ibid.: 407, emphasis in original). The notion of Stranger therefore demonstrates a stigma inherent in their social position as the Other – as "inner enemies" within the host society (ibid.: 402). The existence of the Stranger is indeed integral to constructing a national identity for the dominant group. The national discourses of exclusion that view immigrants as a potential threat to state security are intersected with the roles of immigrants in nation-building processes (Glick Schiller 2009: 29). Simultaneously, the Stranger is considered to be capable of playing the third person in relation to the community for their objective and yet marginalised stance.

Developing Simmel's concept of Stranger, relationships between the immigrant and the host society were variously analysed; for instance, Park's notion of the 'marginal man' (1928) and Schutz's revised typology of the Stranger (1944) were used to analyse the narratives of immigrants' desire to adapt to and assimilate into the host society, as well as their struggle with the rejection of membership. Siu's (1952: 34) notion of the sojourner, contrastingly, presented another type of the Stranger who resided in a foreign country for an extended period without assimilation. Siu suggested that their sojourning involved the accomplishment of a 'job' – the ultimate purpose in living in a foreign

country, which often linked to maximising social status in the homeland. In spite of the differing purposes behind sojourning, Siu argued that the sojourner "would not like to return home without a sense of accomplishment and some sort of security," thereby often prolonging the length of their stay (ibid.). The implication of Siu's analysis is that the orientation of a sojourner's life is directed persistently towards their ethnicity. With the intention of returning to the homeland, the sojourner continues to shape their life with reference to their country of origin and thus the sojourner does not intend to be assimilated into the destination country. These concepts speak to various types of mobility across space and settlement of people, while simultaneously presenting their differing interests and ways of participating in the society.

These varying types of the Stranger are discussed by Harman in his book *The Modern Stranger* (1988). Harman approaches the positionality of the Stranger in relation to how their membership is established in varying social conditions. He formulates that the positionality of the Stranger is built upon two axes – proximity and membership orientation and suggests that spatial, social and cultural proximity that index strangeness and familiarity between the Stranger and the host, as well as ways that the Stranger desires to participate in the host society, create differing ways of living as the Stranger (ibid.: 12-13). Reflecting these differing engagements of the Stranger with the host society, immigrants were assumed to either live in the host society temporarily as a sojourner while adhering to identities shaped with reference to their country of origin, or to gradually get assimilated while discarding these identities and developing new identities associated with the country in which they settled (Rouse 1995: 353). Therefore, the lives of immigrants were understood to be associated with these two

trajectories of identity development.

Conceptual frameworks of the Stranger's membership in a society are also examined by Bauman (1997) who looks at the historical shift of the implications of the Stranger from a threat to homogeneity within the group to the postmodern understandings of it as an important actor for social progress. Those crossing the dividing lines of inside and outside in the modern state were perceived as an outsider. Therefore, strangerhood was to be erased by assimilation or exclusion of the Stranger, by which to maintain the social order (ibid.: 18). However, the postmodern state, Bauman argues, is an age characterised by a coexistence with the Stranger, resonating with Harman's (1988: 44) claim that living side by side with the Stranger results in the blurring of boundaries between the Stranger and host. An omnipresence of the Stranger has reformulated its implications and has developed into the current "*heterophilic* age" that celebrates difference as "the source of pleasurable experience and aesthetic satisfaction," while simultaneously strangerhood continues to hold its conventional meaning (Bauman 1997: 30; 34). Bauman further argues that this polarisation of strangerhood works in conjunction with class polarisation divided by whether or not strangerhood generates economic value (ibid.: 22-24). In a time of an increased importance of relationships with Strangers, strangerhood is to be constructed, classified and consumed.

Considering that the historical development of relationships with strangerhood highlights differing time frames of the migrant experience and mobility patterns, challenges have been made to the notion that fundamental assumptions of migration involve literal spatial movements of people for settlement: the discourse of migration no

longer addresses departure and settlement in the conventional bipolar framework. The mobility of people and their migration narratives are not characterised by a discontinuation created through a singular movement from the society of origin to that of settlement but by a continuum – ongoing embeddedness in both societies (Basch *et al*. 1994; Glick Schiller *et al*. 1992: Lie 1995). It is not that the reproduction of social formation stretched across global spaces is a new phenomenon but that it has become more tangible. Also, full incorporation of immigrants in the host society is regarded as "either not possible or not desirable" (Glick Schiller *et al.* 1995: 52). The assimilationist model gave way to integration policies in counties such as Australia, Canada and the U.K. (Castles and Miller 2003: 250), and has gradually shifted to multiculturalism in many Western countries such as Sweden, Canada and Australia since the 1970s (ibid.: 4). This has resulted in reformulating the foci of the contemporary migration discourses, which lie on "border crossings, multi-connectedness, having simultaneous presences, and being both permanent and in flux" (Soysal 2003: 492). This shift is further reflected in the disappearance of the ideas of 'emigration' and 'immigration' (ibid.), as well as the distinction between individuals who have departed (emigrants) and those who have arrived (immigrants) in contemporary scholarship on migration. Instead, 'migration' has become the mainstream term to refer to a broader sense of mobility. Correspondingly, the tendency that scholars take a broad approach in defining the word migrant as describing people enmeshed in movement across national boundaries. This umbrella term embraces all types of settlers, regardless of the divergent patterns of one's journey, and refers to those who move from their place of origin to a different country to live (Fujita 2009; Griffiths *et al*. 2013; Kato 2010; Mizukami 2007). Whilst the cross-border movements of individuals have been discussed within the overarching discourse of

migration, the term migrant has now been applied to various groups of individuals to describe people involved in mobility, regardless of the duration of stay in the destination. Given these ideas and the premise of a temporal journey of my participants, it is more pertinent to use the general term migrant to describe my participants who were engaged in the processes of crossing national boundaries to start a new life in Dublin. Thus, the boundaries of the two terms 'immigrant' and 'migrant' are differentiated, reflecting the shift in identity construction from singular to multiple, from territorial to deterritorialised, and from discontinuous to continuous. This approach has brought a new perspective to the analysis of transnational connectivities that migrants have established. For instance, the term 'diaspora' that was originally associated with a social form of the Jewish exile, now embraces a broader sense of displacement from original land to a settlement in a new place (Anthias 1998: 565). The notion of diaspora is socially constructed within and out of "a confluence of narratives from annals of collective memory and re-memory" (Brah 1996: 196). Diaspora studies that began to develop in the 1990s recognise the complexities of individuals engaging in the narratives of displacement and unity in transnational contexts. The identification with being a diaspora interlinks with the construction of narratives about an imagined homeland. For the diaspora, communal recognition of cultural practices, language or religion is attributed to "myths of a common ancestry" (Glick Schiller 1999: 96). This serves to shape political, religious and cultural solidarity, as well as historical, communal and psychological continuities with the homeland, and thereby leads to the construction of a historical subjectivity (Clifford 1994; Tölölyan 2007). In a similar vein, in response to the new realities of connectivity, a group of U.S.-based anthropologists propose the concept of transnationalism as an alternative way to study integration and

migrants' complex ties transcending national borders. Transnationalism is conceptualised as the processes of constructing social fields wherein the societies of origin and settlement are linked through simultaneous multi-stranded social relations (Glick Schiller *et al.* 1992: 1-2; 1995; 48).[20] The conceptualisation of transnationalism move away from the dichotomy between emigrants/emigration and immigrants/immigration to simultaneous embeddedness in social relationships across global spaces (Levitt and Sørensen 2004: 2). Glick Schiller (1999: 98-99) makes the claim that those engaged in transnational social interactions often become important players who contribute to nation-building processes and other activities intended to enhance a political situation in the homeland (see also Anderson 1991; Demmers 2002; Skrbis 2001). Such transnational connections in which individuals were involved were recognised in the forms as "colonizing, coerced, circular, chain, and circular migration" or "two-way migration," but these have become integrated into the emergent paradigm of transnationalism (Glick Schiller 1999: 98-99). This approach similarly corresponds to the shift in the theoretical framework of the migration experience from *inter*-national to *trans*-national; migrants' journeys that were seen as one-way movement from country of origin to that of settlement have shifted to a more flexible mobility between and continued engagement in the two (Lie 1995: 304). This shift in conceptual approach to the migrant experience is not simply a result of technological advances but reflects the contemporary postmodern and postnational times wherein the transnational networks in

[20] I am aware of many categories of subjectivity to describe the migrant experience. The difficulty of capturing the migrant experience in one term in fact reflects the historical salience of human movement. For example, the aforementioned notion of diaspora is one conceptual category. Whilst diaspora is a highly politicised concept, another category is 'transmigrant' that is conceptualised as a type of migrant who engages in such processes of transnationalism through constructing social fields (Glick Schiller *et al.* 1995). Transmigrants who build and sustain multiple transnational interconnectedness act as external actors wielding influence on their society of origin politically, economically and culturally (Glick Schiller *et al.* 1995). Transmigrants are not only fully incorporated in the destination society but also recognised as social actors in their homeland society.

which such migrants as diasporas and transmigrants are embedded exist as a resource for political and economic growth (Glick Schiller 1995: 52; 1999: 99). Thus, in a time of increasing social division and interconnectedness of capital and people, contemporary migration provides a framework whereby various flows, networks and allegiances transgress tempo-spatial and nation-based boundaries.

In a time when the modes of the mobility of people are more diverse and various forms of connectivities are sustainable across national borders, migrants' continued engagement in their homeland and host society is also represented by the concept of cosmopolitanism. Although transnationalism and cosmopolitanism are not two discrete concepts since they act on one another, pointing to the syncretic connectivity of a plurality of cultures, communities and belonging, transnationalism is limited in scope, because one shares transnational ties with those with the same, specific areas of identities (van den Anker 2010). Whereas transnationalism is portrayed as the experience of having strong commitments to maintaining relations with the country of origin (Levitt and Sørensen 2004; Glich-Schiller *et al*. 1995), cosmopolitanism is understood as a moral orientation towards no specific type of Others, underpinned by a concept of world citizenship and democracy that transcends national boundaries (Delanty 2004; Hannerz 1990; van den Anker 2010). Such an openness in contradistinction to particular national ties is often equated with unrootedness (van den Anker 2010), and this cosmopolitan outlook that acknowledges difference, openness, flexibility, and hence values strangerhood, is an important approach when it comes to understanding the ability and propensity of a migrant to travel and socialise with Others.

In a similar vein, migrants' transnational engagements are also discussed in relation to the transcendental notion of 'home.' Rapport and Dawson (1998: 8) note that: "'Home' brings together memory and longing, the ideational, the affective and the physical, the spatial and the temporal, the local and the global, the positively evaluated and the negatively." They employ such an ambiguous and fluid concept of home as a framework within which migrants engage in repetitive practices of associating with the homeland and developing proximity to it. Home, they claim, transcends time, space and any other stratification people resort to and best reflects the multiple allegiances that migrants enact. Thus, a sense of 'home' is, as with identity, neither singular nor static: it can be plural and is constantly evaluated, renewed and constructed (ibid.: 9; see also Brettell 2006; Lentin 2002). These multiple interconnectivities across national borders characterise the migrant's transnational experience (Szanton Blanc *et al*. 1992; Vertovec 1999; Wolf 2002). In this way, the modern experiences of migration deconstruct the analytical model of human mobility as a static experience.

Diverse forms of transnational mobility

Today transnational mobility among Japanese people stretches to an increasingly diverse demographic and it has taken on a distinctive temporary character. Students' mobility is one such example. Until the late 1970s, overseas study was embarked on by male elites and those drop-outs who had failed their university entrance examinations (Kelsky 2001: 102; Mori 2004: 157). Students' mobility, especially of the elites who are expected to play an important part in contributing to national development with the gained skills and knowledge, is understood as an incipient form of skilled migration that

could lead to ‘brain drain’ and result in permanent settlement (Castles and Miller 2003: 171). However, Japan’s economic affluence has made overseas study such a prevailing practice amongst Japanese youths, and thereby the demand for foreign higher education has become highly commercialised (Andressen and Kumagai 1996; Befu 2003; Habu 2000; Ichimoto 2004). In accordance with the internationalisation that Japan has been pursing since the 1980s, foreign education – overseas experiences and mastering foreign languages, particularly English – has become an integral part of the rhetoric of internationalisation (Habu 2000: 51). Yet, in a time of the increased temporal scale of mobility of Japanese people, overseas study as well as foreign assignment no longer bring as great prestige as they used to do.

In recent years, the number of degree-seeking Japanese students travelling overseas itself has been steadily dropping from its peak of 82,945 in 2004 to 55,350 in 2013 (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports and Science & Technology in Japan 2016). Given the decline in Japan’s population, the declining numbers of Japanese citizens studying abroad is an expected tendency. However, what is interesting is that the fall in the number of students studying abroad is featured as more indicative of an ‘inward-looking’ (*uchimuki*) orientation of Japanese youths. There has been the tendency in the mass media and scholarly discussions to single out this inward-looking attitude of youths as their underlying characteristic (Yamamoto and Iwaki 2011). The dismantling of the conventional employment structures has certainly given rise to concern over prospects amongst youths and facilitated the tendency to seek lifestyle stability instead of going abroad. Students’ reluctance to engage in education overseas is also reasoned in terms of concerns about its consequences, that is, the delay in

embarking on job hunting and the scepticism in Japanese corporate culture about their acquiring perceived non-Japanese traits such as aggressiveness or outspokenness (Shimauchi 2014: 117).[21] Moreover, a 2012 survey shows that about 60 to 70 per cent of companies recruiting new graduates did not possess a system with which to assess students' study abroad experiences (Ota 2014: 10). Hence, there appears to be no specific educational and employment system to support overseas study of students.

The tendency to seeking security amongst youths is explored in Furuichi's book *The Happy Youth of a Desperate Country* (2011). Furuichi discusses a paradoxical reality in which Japanese youths experience seemingly contradictory feelings of stagnation resulting from the lingering effects of the recession and of satisfaction with their lives. The 2010 Cabinet Office survey revealed that 70.5 per cent of people in their twenties showed a satisfaction with their lives, a percentage higher than that of any other age cohort or of people in their twenties in the last few decades. Furuichi reasoned that this discrepancy was a compensating response; that is, though developing a sense of dissatisfaction with society, they simultaneously felt fulfiled by living an affordable life in small yet comfortable surroundings (2011: 105). Implied in his argument is that the distance between their everyday world and society is reflected in decentred consciousness. If the early post-war phase is characterised by the progressive development of homogenising consciousness, it would appear that youths in contemporary Japanese society no longer share such a common consciousness and the

[21] In relation to the last point, returnees' struggles to get re-assimilated into Japanese society illuminate this tendency. Returnees who are acquainted with foreign customs are often seen as culturally non-Japanese and belonging to *soto* (foreign) (White 1992; Mori 2004). They have been seen as "catalysts of internationalization" since the mid-1980s, yet are still recognised as threats to the Japanese social structures that value cohesion and harmony (Mori 2004: 160).

belief that efforts put into upward mobility improve their quality of life. This, of course, does not suggest that all Japanese youths lack the desire for upward mobility or going abroad.

In fact, the number of Japanese studying abroad in 2009 is nearly four times as large as that before the bubble-burst in the mid-1980s. The 2014 Japan Student Services Organization report similarly shows Japanese students' increasing engagement efforts in study abroad (Japan Student Services Organization 2014). It follows that Japanese youths today are in effect engaged in transnational mobility more than earlier generations were. Also, in order to boost an active participation of youths in the Japanese labour market that has expanded to global locations, the Japanese government has mapped out a vision for fostering globally competent human resources, embarking on a set of schemes, such as the Council on Promotion of Human Resource for Globalization Development that was established in 2011, 'Tobitate! Japan Scholarship Program' in 2013 and Super Global Universities in 2014. These schemes, involving the reform of higher education, attempt to provide a firm platform for students to gain the skills necessary to become 'global human resources.' In their report by the Council on Promotion of Human Resource for Globalization Development, global human resources are articulated as those with "linguistic and communication skills, self-direction and positiveness, a spirit of challenge, cooperativeness and flexibility, a sense of responsibility and mission, as well as understanding of other cultures and a sense of identity as Japanese" (The Council on Promotion of Human Resource for Globalization Development 2011). As clearly stated in this, students are encouraged to become competent workers in and outside of Japan. Simultaneously,

enhancing a sense of being Japanese through interacting with Others is part of the discourse of internationalisation in which Japanese youths travelling abroad are expected to engage. Against the discrepancy between the perceived risk-averse orientation of youths and an outward-looking educational reform, how do youths embark on a journey abroad?

Japanese youths have begun to act through the practice of going overseas – to various destinations. In terms of the overseas experience of degree students, analyses thus far have been made primarily based on young single adults from urban upper-middle class backgrounds, particularly women, who travelled to Western, English-speaking countries with the tangible objective of academic achievement (Andressen and Kumagai 1996; Habu 2000; Ichimoto 2004; Matsui 1995). Despite a conservative response to the current financial insecurity and uncertain future prospects of the Japanese job market, the post-bubble periods have seen ever-increasing numbers of youths going abroad under the working holiday scheme (Kato 2010: 15). Coinciding with this phenomenon, scholarly attention has started focusing on the migratory movement undertaken by temporary residents who do not engage in schooling or jobs in destination places and their actual lived experiences. Fujita's (2009) research looks at Japanese youths travelling to two global centres, New York City and London as working holiday makers. Fujita's work demonstrates the tendencies to seek self-realisation and spiritual freedom in contrast to the conventional normative allegiances that are expected within Japanese society. Similarly, Kawashima (2012) looks at the lives of Japanese working holiday makers in Australia and Kato (2010) look at both working holiday makers and students in Vancouver. The transnational mobility of these degree- and non-degree students is

significantly interrelated with the intention of accumulating cultural capital. These works offer a picture of mobile Japanese youths yearning to explore a new way of life and learning to play new roles in a destination country at various stages in their life.

Common in these bodies of work is that relocation overseas is discussed as a quest for fulfilling a spiritual hunger that does not necessarily involve monetary gain. As opposed to the classical model of migration in which transnational migration is driven by the desire for economic opportunities, recent Japanese migration is marked by the movement of individuals engaging in self-exploration in international settings. As seen in the aforementioned works, the Japanese who travel overseas are economically privileged and thus do not consider financial gain possible through the experience of moving overseas as the primary objective. Certainly, the economic upheavals and the rise in unemployment rates for youths have played a part in facilitating an increase in Japanese youths' international migration (Andressen and Kumagai 1996; Fujita 2009; Kawashima 2010). However, domestic employment instability as a push factor alone does not explain youths' travel; if employment instability was a major concern for them, they would seek lifestyle stability in their surroundings. Instead of centring economic aspirations within the migration of Japanese youths, it is the discourse of the pursuit of self-fulfilment that has surfaced in the 1990s which is crucial to understanding the recent tendency to travel overseas amongst Japanese youths in general and those whom I encountered in Dublin.

Inglehart (1971: 991-992) stipulates post-materialism as an ongoing phenomenon amongst upper-middle class people in post-industrial societies which subordinates an

individual's need for economic security to "the need for belonging and to aesthetic and intellectual needs"; this tendency to value cultural capital has become familiar amongst those growing up in relative affluence in the contemporary world, particularly in Western societies. The framework of lifestyle migration conceptualised by Benson and O'Reilly (2009: 609) has been formed as a response to recent diversification of the modes and patterns of mobility. Undoubtedly, all forms of mobility are aimed at improving a quality of life. However, the underlying framework of lifestyle migration attempts to reconsider the intersection of class and migration, tying various forms of transnational mobility to those with the privilege to move and choose life courses. The conditions and motivations that underpin lifestyle migration therefore differ distinctly from those of economic migration or refugees (ibid.). Lifestyle migration is arguably subject to economic conditions; given the difficulty of sustaining a desirable lifestyle in the destination (O'Reilly 2007), economic privilege is the primary condition that regulates the mobility of lifestyle migrants. Although concerns for financial insecurity are often pronounced even by lifestyle migrants themselves, they travel with adequate financial resources, thereby creating a particular consciousness and life pattern that affect their experiences in a new life.

In this form of mobility, the decision to move to a new place is driven by a set of concerns, ranging from family relationships, career to community life. The desire for a freedom from the constraints arising from various aspects of life works in conjunction with the romanticised imaginings of a particular place as allowing for a better lifestyle (Benson and Osbaldiston 2014: 3). Aspirations for a better lifestyle inevitably engender critical reflective thoughts on lifestyles and norms in the homeland, as well as society as

a whole (Griffiths and Maile 2014: 147-148; Kurotani 2007: 22-23). Such relational processes of the imagining of the native society and destination are an important aspect when looking into decision-making processes within lifestyle migration. There is a common consciousness amongst lifestyle migrants that a relocation to a new place is a practical solution to their concerns and a way of achieving a preferred work-life balance (Benson and Osbaldiston 2014: 3).

The migratory flows narrated in lifestyle migration encompass similar incentives to counter-urbanisation wherein people seek the rural idyll (Benson 2011; 2014) and a bohemian style of life (Korpela 2009; 2014), or escape from an urbanised Western capitalist society (Oliver and O'Reilly 2010). The scope of lifestyle migration is wide-ranging, stretched to accommodate a domestic move from metropolitan areas to relatively small towns or rural environments (Hoey 2005; Vannini and Taggart 2014) and even an international move to major global cities like Berlin (Griffiths and Maile 2014). In this respect, particular destinations encapsulating a desire for an authentic and improved way of living (Benson and Osbaldiston 2014: 9) do not necessarily equate to the actual rurality of a destination but are imagined to represent as such (Benson and O'Reilly 2009; Griffiths and Maile 2014). Therefore, whilst the asymmetrical political and economic power relations between societies of origin and destination serve to pave the way for various modes of transnational mobility (cf. Amit 2007; Benson and Osbaldiston 2014: 12; Williams and Hall 2002: 2), an individual's decision to migrate reflects the socially-constructed imaginings of a particular place and lifestyle with which the migrant desires to be associated.

Here, it is also important to note that the quest for a better way of life embedded within the desire for authenticity and existential experiences, shares an epistemological analogy, that between lifestyle migration and tourism. In analysing modern tourist experiences, Cohen (1979) distinguishes five modes of the tourist's relation to the 'centre' that symbolises his/her spiritual axis, an ultimate real life.[22] Within the various touristic modes of an individual's existential quest, Cohen suggests a flexible connectivity to multiple locales. In particular, the mode of experiential tourist, who Cohen considers as sampling different cultures by eagerly engaging in each culture whilst remaining an outsider, helps us understand my participants' Irish experiences. Through their quest to discover the most desired form of life, the travel itself may become the most significant aspect of their experience so that the tourist, in an extreme case, becomes an external seeker and a drifter (1979: 189). This form of tourism shares the fundamental features of recent migration patterns. Nagatomo (2008) points to an intimate correlation between tourism and motives for migration. In his study of Japanese residents in Australia, Nagatomo reveals that 71 per cent of his participants had either had a tourist experience or had visited on business trips prior to their move to Australia (2008: 10). He argues

[22] The fivefold classification of tourist experiences are the recreational mode, the diversionary mode, the experiential mode, the experimental and the existential mode. The tourist in the recreational mode is eager to indulge him/herself in the pleasure of ready-made entertainment, for which the question of its authenticity therefore is not relevant. The experience gained through travelling is the flip side of his/her real world that generates pressures so that travelling is taken as a means to reinforce adherence to the centre (Cohen 1979: 183-185). In contrast, the tourist experience in the diversionary mode is a mere meaning-less pleasure because the travelling experience does not serve to create a centre for this type of tourist (ibid.: 185-186). The experiential mode of tourism is characterised as a quest for rewarding, meaningful experiences in a society or culture other than their own. This type of tourist lacks centre remaining an outsider amongst the people the tourist sees as leading an authentic way of life. Therefore, the tourist does not accept nor is converted to experiences, and experiences only vicariously the authenticity of life of others (ibid.: 186-188). The experimental mode in which the tourist lacks centre, commitments or ultimate goals, leads to a quest for an alternative spiritual centre. The difference between the experiential mode and the experimental one lies in the way the tourist engages in what the tourist sees as authentic in others' lives. Lastly, the existential mode denotes the tourist's absolute commitment to an external, 'elective' centre than their native own (ibid.: 189-192).

that the images of the locals enjoying relaxed lifestyles which his participants had gained from tourism, engendered the desire to escape from work-oriented lifestyles in Japan. Similarly, in her research on long-stay tourism in Malaysia, Ono (2010; 2014) argues for an affinity between tourism and migration. In the context of transnational long-stay tourism, people enjoy an experiential lifestyle abroad and keenly get involved in the host society. In short, they, as seasonal visitors, 'live' for some time abroad as opposed to temporarily visiting, as the term 'tourism' implies. Their long-stay tourism is premised on an ultimate return to Japan, but residence in a foreign country is in effect indefinite.

In addition, although lifestyle migration is taken as part of the process of finding a fulfilling life, this process is in part a response to the boredom of routinised lives and thus includes leisure and relaxation activities for self-fulfilment (O'Reilly and Benson 2009: 4). Given these inseparable characteristics between tourism and migration in terms of time scale and motivations, as Williams and Hall (2002) argue, tourism flows are part of the broader debates of migration. Tourism and migration act upon each other so that one becomes the player of both consumption and production in the destination. A continuum between tourism and migration arguably points to a porous conceptual boundary between a tourist and migrant (Amit 2007; Rodman 2007; Wilson *et al*. 2010). Nevertheless, as Benson and O'Reilly (2009b) advocate, lifestyle migration should not simply be allied to tourism because people 'live' what is considered as a meaningful life in the destination. What is also important in understanding the underlying phenomenon of lifestyle migration is to look at post-migration experiences.

The study of lifestyle migration anchors its theoretical underpinnings within the migration paradigm wherein a quest for an improved way of life is not characterised as a single event of movement but represents migrants' lifestyle trajectories that inevitably involve ongoing processes of becoming (Benson and Osbaldiston 2014: 8). Such migratory movements intertwined with the desires of self-growth and self-fulfilment are narrated under the terms of realising 'the potential self' (Hoey 2005), achieving 'an authentic self' (Giddens 1991: 80; Osbaldiston 2012: 129), or searching for 'the true self' (Kato 2010; Korpela 2014). Whilst the terms are differently expressed, common to this rhetoric is the fact that the migrant's quest for an improved way of life elsewhere is significantly tied to a becoming process. I argue that the remaking of the self is equated with the remaking of roles and identities. Freedom is a central theme to shape narratives of lifestyle migration; in the context of Japanese migration, lifestyle migrants' desire to free themselves from the eyes of *seken*, identities and ideal roles attached to various levels of stratification, such as nation, ethnicity, locality, family or gender, are major factors. Since individuals' identities are interwoven into national discourses about what it means to be a Japanese man or woman, it was the desire to transform the self through acquiring new identities and roles that motivated them to travel to Dublin. In light of this, their journey symbolises the ongoing process of "what you can become" (O'Reilly and Benson 2009: 5; see also Benson and Osbaldiston 2014; Salazar 2014).

The framework of lifestyle migration is of great benefit in comprehending the narratives of my participants because it fits with their socio-economic profiles and motivations to travel. Importantly, this form of mobility is a phenomenon not exclusive to Western

societies but typical of post-industrial societies including Japan. In 2007, the Asahi Shinbun carried feature articles under the title of 'the lost generation' about Japanese youths, one of which focussed on the stories of Japanese women living lives of hardship yet full of passion in neighbouring Asian countries. Labelled as 'the generation of self-searching (*jibun sagashi sedai*),' the article gives a glimpse into the prevailing reality of Japanese youths who travel overseas to seek a greater meaning in life beyond that of material and financial affluence (Asahi Shinbun, January 5th 2007). At a time when people feel that life choices have become diversified and individualised, the practice of going overseas parallels some other lifestyle options available to young people. The underlying implications entailed in the proliferation of *freeter* as well as the continuing tendency of Japanese youths travelling overseas point to a greater range of choices in life courses available to contemporary Japanese society. It is within this context that my participants, both men and women, represent the struggle to carve out various possibilities in life within a global space. In Japanese migration studies, such individuals on a spiritual quest have been labelled 'spiritual migrants' in Sato's research (1993),[23] 'cultural migrants' by Fujita (2009) or 'lifestyle migrants' (Nagatomo 2008). However, it is evident that all these concepts correspond to the spectrum of lifestyle migrant.

Also, I argue that this recent mode of migration of the Japanese as well as of my participants should be understood as a form of deviance. The seeking of an *ikigai* is

[23] Sato uses the term '*seishin immin*' that could be translated as 'spiritual migrants.' However, in the English version of the book published nearly a decade later she adopts the term 'lifestyle migrants' to describe her participants who were motivated to travel to Australia for reasons other than economic purposes (Sato 1993; 2001).

typically discussed in terms of the pursuit of self-interest beyond the constraints of social relationships so that the self is able to exercise its autonomy to adopt their own roles, identities and lifestyles without being controlled by family or *seken*. Indeed, transnational mobility discussed within lifestyle migration could easily fall into the discourse of individualism.

Today, people celebrate yet struggle with larger choices in lifestyle that has become more individualised and flexible. Diversified lifestyle choices are characteristic of contemporary societies wherein institutionalised norms, practices and roles that frame one's life trajectory and identifications have become disaggregated. As a result, dealing with the risks and opportunities of life, and ultimately a search for an appropriate lifestyle, is entrusted with individuals (Bauman 2000: 32; Giddens 1991: 78). A reflexive shaping of life course and identity is privatised and deregulated, reflecting the shifting emphasis from collective life to an individualised one (Bauman 2000: 29). In our current 'second modernity' in Beck's (1992) term, or 'liquid modernity' in Bauman's (2000) or 'high modernity' in Giddens's (1991) in which reflexive modernisation processes of societies, as well as of individuals as its consequence, are inherently linked to globalisation and risks, the individual today has no choice but to engage in choosing from a multiplicity of lifestyle choices (Bauman 2000: 34; Beck 1992: 88; Giddens 1991: 81). Therefore, the phenomenon of lifestyle migration, which is undoubtedly harnessed by globalisation, can be seen as an inevitable response to individualising modernity and as part of 'the reflexive project of the self' in Giddens's term that indicates an ongoing process of making a coherent sense of the self and identity (Giddens 1991: 75; see also Bauman 1997: 25). The pursuit of their self-interest,

in this sense, is not a mere manifestation of individualism but represents the embodiment of the social pressure to pursue self-interest (Korpera 2014). In short, the search of individuality and freedom entailed in lifestyle migration is an inevitable response to the discourse of reflexive modernity (Benson and O'Reilly 2009; Benson and Osbaldiston 2014; Korpela 2014). Hence, scholars working on lifestyle migration locate the account of flexibility in movement amongst the relative affluent individuals beyond a perspective of class-based action (Benson and O'Reilly 2009). Against this background, the self-searching phenomenon that has become prominent since the 1980s in the Japanese context should not simply be attributed to Japanese economic privilege but can be seen as reflective of an individual quest for a better life (Kato 2010: 49).

In this view, the mobility that the migrant practises does not create disruptions in life trajectory but rather illuminates a continuous path within it. In short, self-realisation entailed in pursuing the further enhancement of capital, particularly cultural capital, in a new cultural context is not deviance in a personal sense. However, the practice of seeking cultural capital outside the structures of the native society could be deviance in a collective sense. Given that such a practice is aimed at the enhancement of their own capital and works against the development of state capital, transnational mobility is also considered to be a somewhat asocial practice in economic terms. Moreover, transnational mobility is perceived as posing a potential threat to social cohesion. This can also be considered in relation to the concepts of *uchi*/*soto* and *honne*/*tatemae*. Going abroad is now strongly associated with the idea of searching for individuality. However, being able to have a sense of being *uchi* and expressing *hone*, made possible by disembedding themselves from Japanese society, is fundamentally antithetical to

fulfilling the roles of *soto* and behaving *tatemae*. Considering that personhood represents how the self plays out in social relationships and that it is social structures that form roles that individuals are expected to fulfil, not being under the constraints of social relationships equates to acquiring the values, roles and thus identities of *soto* (the foreign). As I have discussed earlier, there is an assumption that a sense of satisfaction and being Japanese fundamentally intersects with conforming to *soto*'s expectations through roles. Given that the interdependency of identity and role can be observed through action (Jenkins 2004), delivering roles is a requisite element not only to achieve personhood but also to develop identities. From this perspective, the practice of going abroad often falls into the discourse of Western individualism that stands in contradistinction to the Japanese ideal of groupism. In these discourses, Western individualism and its social emphasis on the self allow for discontinuing social relationships within which to shape collective social identities. Therefore, the selfishness and immaturity embedded within the discourse of Western individualism (Hendry 1992) are a clear threat to the underlying basis of Japanese groupism. In this view, migration works in ways that lead not only to the development of an individual's capital and but also to the attainment of Western values that may lead to undermining the key characteristics of Japanese social structures which shape Japanese personhood. In the context where transnational mobility has widely been labelled as problematic, temporary migration to Dublin, despite its temporal disembeddedness, therefore challenges the essential quality of being 'a Japanese person.' The practice of going abroad is indeed a process through which the Japanese can manifest their sense of adhering to and valuing another lifestyle, that is, *soto*'s lifestyle. It is within this context that the Japanese youths, both male and female, whom I met in the field labelled

themselves as individuals defying mainstream lifestyles to varying degrees: they had deviated from the normative ideals of an adult life course in a manner similar to the way that a *freeter* designs their life.

From this perspective, my research attempts to feed into the burgeoning discussion of lifestyle migration. As Amit (2007) reminds us, one may occupy many conceptual categories; a conceptual boundary of lifestyle migration overlaps with other types of mobility. For example, previous studies reveal that even students utilise the practice of studying overseas as a sort of escapism from competing in the education system and the mainstream way of life (Andressen and Kumagai 1996; Habu 2000; Matsui 1995). Given the structural impediments that restrict free mobility unlike an intra-E.U. mobility, temporariness of domicile is conditioned for Japanese nationals. Student mobility, which may cause sequential migratory flows, also falls within the broad spectrum of lifestyle migration, in that study abroad is an expedient and legitimate means to gain transnational mobility. Hence, there is a fine line between the mobility of student, working holiday makers and lifestyle migration in the Japanese context. However, it is clear that these forms of mobility share a common interest in enhancing their cultural capital and improving a quality of lifestyle. The Japanese whom I encountered in the field shared a sense of questioning the norms and expectations that impose a certain way of living, and the idea that going abroad would lead to a better way of life in a society other than their own. In this regard, despite their variously labelled legal status as student, working holiday maker or work permit holder, people crossing national borders in these forms fit well with the underlying scope of lifestyle migrant. Hence, it is pertinent in this thesis to integrate students, working holiday makers and work permit

holder into the paradigm of lifestyle migration.

Lifestyle migration represents a route for finding an *ikigai*, leading to creating life paths and identities of their own. In such processes of making identities involved in a journey to and from Dublin, how can my participants be considered in terms of the nature of their Irish experiences? In light of all the ways in which various types of strangerhood feature differing engagements with the homeland and host society, transmigrants should be differentiated from Simmel's Stranger and sojourner in that transmigrants as political actors are firmly anchored and fully engage with life in a destination society. In addition, liminality created through moving from one's livelihood domain is to be constructed, consumed and institutionalised (Tanaka 2013: 10). Such designated liminality discussed in terms of legal status, for instance, the lack of a legal membership in the host society (Mizukami 2007: 22), does not apply to transmigrants. Given these points, it is possible to envisage that the notion of sojourner may be of relevance to understanding my participants' migrant experiences. Since the underlying notion of the sojourner is linked to temporary residency and a non-membership orientation, the nature of the Irish experiences of my participants, young Japanese, who came from outside yet stayed in Dublin with the intention of returning home, may correspond to the life orientation of sojourner. This will be explored in Chapter Seven.

What is also important to consider is that migration experiences are subject not only to context, but also to legal status and time spent in the destination. One's legal status that defines the duration of stay significantly interplays with migratory trajectories and experiences, but this does not imply that the temporal dimensions of migration are not

worthy of attention. Although time intersects with the extent to which the experience of migration influences a migrant's processes of becoming, migration practised within an individual's life course affects the migrant's subjectivity (Griffiths *et al*. 2013). Therefore, the issues surrounding migrants – the transformation of identities and their strangerhood – are not exclusive to those who are fully settled in the destination society but also apply to those who travel abroad on a temporary basis. Commonalities amongst people enmeshed in migration lie in the fact that the life of a migrant is essentially fraught with ambiguity, in the sense that the migrant may retain a liminal positionality and that the time frame for residence in the host society is open-ended. In addition, flexible transnational mobility makes it possible for people to experience a transition in status, for instance, from that of working holiday maker through work permit holder to permanent resident (cf. Robertson 2014). It is natural that people's life plans and orientations are subject to change according to their needs at various stages of life (Befu 2003: 5). Migrants' lives therefore fundamentally involve mobility in terms of space and legal status (Kato 2010: 48). Such temporariness and flexibility, together with the difficulty of pinning down the definition of migrant, are entangled within an ever-changing life course. Thus, the discourse about the transnational flow of people is not simply a question of temporariness versus permanency (King-O'Riain 2011); being a migrant can itself be a *process* (Mizukami 2007: 30).

Socialisation process through migration

What I want to explore in this thesis is the process of identity making that is made possible through migration. Transnational practices and engagements entailed in the

migrant experience are a window for examining how borders and boundaries are (re)created and transgressed (Glick Schiller *et al*. 1995: 50). Migration represents a transformative nexus wherein a range of collective attributes come into play in delineating individuals' identities. Indeed, spatial movements of individuals bring about transformations in their identities as they become integrated into the social structures of a destination society. Being placed in a marginal position in the new society, the migrant becomes more aware of who they are, while simultaneously having the capacity to inhabit multiple subjectivities. As I have noted at the outset of this chapter, identity should be understood as a "'production' which is never complete, always in process and always constituted within, and not outside, representation." (Hall 1990: 222). Hall (ibid.) argues that instead of viewing identity as essentialised and static, which was critical in understanding post-colonial struggles amongst diasporas, it should be marked in relation to multiple points of sameness and difference; identities are delineated with reference not only to the unified and hegemonic migrant subjectivity grounded on shared historical experiences, but also to multiple layers of difference constructed in a particular historical and cultural context. Identity is therefore a continuing process developed through transformation and difference (ibid.: 235). This view of identity recognised as an ongoing process of one's becoming, emphasises competing processes of identity formation; that is, both heterogeneous and solidifying processes of identification that can be situated within the same subjectivity. Such processes of social positioning point to the transformative and multifaceted nature of identity which is contextually shaped through social relations to others.

The question of identity accentuates the contemporary multi-faceted social reality in the

local-global nexus, becoming increasingly interrelated with migration processes. Dimensions of identity are therefore inevitably linked to the globalisation of "social, economic, cultural, and demographic processes" that takes place not only within nation territories but also within the global sphere, decentring and disseminating knowledge, materials and people (Kearney 1995: 547). Migration has created complex and entangled forms of identity, unravelling the pre-existing structures that relied on the nation-state for their premise (Castles and Miller 2003: 15). Increased transnational mobility not only marks the unsettling of the boundaries of nation-states but has also upset the premise of the modern nation-state built upon the ideal of ethnic homogeneity and an underlying territory-based identity (Mac Éinrí 2000: 15).

Whilst there is decreased significance of the nation-state as a primary unit of identification in a post-national age (Kearney 1991), migration plays a significant part in reinforcing a recognition of various imaginary commonalities that form a sense of belonging. In spite of the fact that identities are considered as less territorially bounded in the context of transnational migration (Demmers 2002: 89; Mac Éinrí 2000: 4), migration processes do not negate the significance of borders, boundaries and national identities (Smith 2001: 3), leading to, for instance, long-distance nationalism. Claims of identity mark one's sense of belonging to a wide range of collective groups. One such dimension of identification is attributed to ethnicity.

Whilst the narratives of nation-state in the discourses of migration remain the most influential, ethnicity is arguably one of the key facets that constitutes one's identity (Glick Schiller 2009: 19). Ethnicity is sometimes considered to be the primary aspect of

a relationship by which to characterise one's social life (Adam 2015: 54). Ethnicity is the basic foundation of nation-building but can also be a source of conflict (Eriksen 2010: 2-3). The early primordialist model of ethnicity perceived it as being based on primordial attachments established by kinship, and hence an ethnic membership assigned at birth was thought to be maintained statically across generations (Geertz 1963; Issacs 1975; Shils 1957). Countering the idea of ethnicity as a fixed entity in the primordialist understanding, the instrumentalist approach paid more attention to ethnic boundary markings. Barth (1969) sets out this theoretical framework, seeing ethnicity as a form of social organisation that emerges through social interactions that give rise to the construction of the self-other dichotomy. Echoing Barth's notion of ethnicity, constructivists such as Jenkins (1994) argues that ethnicity is constructed as an ongoing process of self-identification as well as being categorised by others. In these processes, identifying shared heritages based on cultural traits become distinctive markers within which to enact cultural differentiations from other ethnic groups, and are often mobilised in order to achieve group solidarity and enhance class position (Castles and Miller 2003: 34-35; Eriksen 2010: 23-24). Therefore, the subjective meanings of ethnic boundaries are strategically employed for the varying interests of individuals and collectives (see also Brass 1974; Cohen 1974). For instance, Hall (1991) argues that 'Black' as a political category of identity was formed in response to the political system of racism in Britain in the 1970s. Social positioning of this collective identity is contingent on the political interests of individuals and collectives, and thus the claims of a Black identity are not static. In these ways, identifying with ethnic attributions as discussed in the instrumentalism/situationalism/constructivism approach to ethnicity, ethnicity is not pre-given nor fixed but a socially constructed collective boundary.

For migrants, the shared representations of ethnicity can also be reified in ethnically bounded spaces such as Chinatowns and Little Italys wherein a collective effort to maintain ties with the 'others' with the same ethnic backgrounds leads to solidarity and the development of institutional infrastructure. Further to this, migrants' lives can be tied to ethnic residential segregation, which is also a class issue, implying a broader social segmentation with host community (Castles and Miller 2003: 209; see also Portes 2000). Thus, ethnicity plays out processes of distinction in various ways. However, what is more relevant and important, as (Hale 2004: 461-462) argues, is not the debate over ethnicity as promordialism or constructivism but "how strongly individuals are tied to ethnic identities." It is important to consider that how ethnicity and other dimensions that constitute the self directs the ways in which migrants lead their life.

The amount of capital that a migrant possesses prior to migration is also held to be important in further characterising their experience of life in their destination. Various forms of capital are convertible and collectively transmissible, reflecting power and unequal access to capital resources, and thereby leading to the reproduction of social hierarchies. In the process of identity construction, marginality is an inseparable issue to the life of a migrant. As I have discussed in the section on the intersection of migration and capital, capital has always been dependent on the global interconnectedness of people, wielding a simultaneous impact on both migrant-sending and -receiving societies. However, social structures of power in both societies are less likely to be altered by migration flows. Portes (2010: 1545) points to three factors to consider the regarding impact of migrants on the host society, which are "the numbers involved" in

migration, "the duration of the movement" and "its class composition." With reference to the last point, the economic and social incorporation of migrants into the economy of a host society is likely related to their class (ibid.: 1546). Although the migrants' relationships to the society gradually alter over generations with improved social mobility, migrants are likely to serve to maintain the existing structures of power and wealth. The reproduction of class-based incorporation of migrants into the host society leads to their persistent marginal positionality, and migrants only add new layers to the existing ethnic landscape of the society. Thus, the discourse of identity has fundamentally addressed various processes of identifying their positionality within a dominant-subordinate social model (Rouse 1995: 358).

Moreover, it is capital that enables a particular group of people to engage in a distinctive cultural practice. Lifestyle migration involving a quest for an improved quality of life is one such example and is relevant to this research. Those with a high level of capital can afford to engage in a particular lifestyle in a new social setting. With capital facilitating them to pursue further cultural capital accumulation, a distinction can be drawn between lifestyle migrants and compatriots belonging to lower classes (Benson 2011; 2014; Oliver and O'Reilly 2010; Olwig 2007). In addition, the privilege that the migrant possesses does not merely refer to economic capital that is individually acquired but also to collective attributions such as race or ethnicity (Benson 2014). The notion of race was conceptualised in relation to genetic characteristics but is predominantly now seen as a social construct that relates to an understanding of global hierarchies (Glick Schiller 1992: 17-18). Race often obscures class differentiations that exist within a racial group, while simultaneously serving as a commonality for transnational

communities (ibid.: 18; Anthias 1998). Symbolic capital created through racialisation or ethnification processes can take on a great significance in migrants' lives, especially when there is a mismatch between their actual capital and symbolic capital represented in the context of their destinations (cf. Ong 1999). For example, the struggle to re-enact a middle-class status amongst Brazilian professionals living in Portugal is demonstrated in the study of Torresan (2007), in which ethnicity, capital and class are intricately intertwined in their efforts to reproduce social identity. Along similar lines, Limpangog (2013) explores the intersection of gender, class and the decision to migrate amongst her Filipino middle-class women, arguing that they embarked on migration to Australia as a strategic means to maintain their middle-class lifestyle. Therefore, capital plays itself out through reproducing systems of distinction in the lives of migrants; in the process, class and ethnic distinctions have a tendency to be re-enacted.

Through these ways, migration can play a prominent role in articulating various social distinctions within national, class and ethnic dynamics, through which the transformative dimension of identity is exemplified. In addition, the manifestation of identities is, as seen in Ong's (1999: 112) discussion of "flexible citizenship," referring to "the strategies and effects" of the Hong Kong business elite "seeking to both circumvent *and* benefit from different nation-state regimes," an arbitrary choice of taking up a specific positionality. The claims to ethnicity, gender, class or nationality around the self are the dimensions migrants strategically draw on for their positionality in the destination society (Castles and Miller 2003: 35). This mirrors the ways in which migrants negotiate to represent themselves in a particular historical and cultural context, because being a migrant is not simply a result of the designation of legal status but of

the process of identifying and being identified within a particular social structure of power. A migrant's identity is iteratively renewed through a complex web of inter-linking social groups. The transformation of identities interlinked within this relational process of social positioning can help us understand the meanings of being a migrant in a given context. In relation to the Japanese, when crossing over national boundaries, their identities need not always hinge solely on the concept of a nation but are multiply constructed and expressed. Migration experiences inevitably expose them to different discourses, which facilitates processes of re-socialisation and the reshaping of the meanings of being a Japanese within a global space. In this regard, these processes render the framework of migration as an arena of articulating social distinctions, as well as of identity making and negotiation.

Migration can also generate an intensified tendency to produce competing narratives of transformation and reproduction: the flows of people crossing boundaries contribute not only to a dispersion of kin, ethnic and national networks but can also inversely bind people to many different types of collectives, which provides multiple orientations for the migrant's life. For those who desire personal transformation, for instance, moving into a new social context allows them to go through sex transformation (Rodman 2007) or improve the quality of life (Benson 2011). Conversely, changes can be brought as a result of migration. For example, migration can dynamically result in changes in social relationships between a husband and a wife (Kurotani 2007) and can bring about an awareness of a fixed sense of national belonging (Wilson *et al*. 2010). Indeed, transnational movements of people facilitated by globalisation and the prominence of nationalism do not exist in opposition to one other but simultaneously influence one

another (Anderson 1992; Glick Schiller *et al*. 1995). Migration therefore is closely interrelated with the processes of diminishing and transgressing borders and boundaries, while simultaneously recreating and strengthening relationships with boundary markings. Given the paradox of the competing transformative and reproductive dimensions identified in a migration paradigm, it has both a dynamic and instrumental role in bringing change to the lives of migrants.

Consequently, there is a need to consider how the seemingly contradictory orientations of going global and becoming 'Japanese' intersect with the desire to actively transform one's identity. Explorations of the migration-identity nexus for the Japanese are documented by various scholars. In pre-war times, transnational connections were evident as overseas Japanese communities maintained strong ties to Japan through constantly receiving Japanese workers and sending their children back to Japan temporarily for a Japanese education (Adachi 2006: 9). Such transnational flows of people served to maintain and solidify a sense of Japaneseness amongst settlers (see also Nagatomo 2015: 170-178). Also, it is often the case that *Nikkei-jin*, who returned to Japan mostly from Latin America in order to fill a labour shortage created by Japan's post-war economic growth, have experienced political, economic and social marginalisation. In the case of the Brazilian *Nikkei-jin*, Tsuda (2006) details that, despite their middle-class backgrounds and relatively high symbolic capital in Brazilian society due to their affiliation with Japan's improved political and economic position, they have struggled to re-enact a middle-class status and fit in a narrowly-defined Japanese ethno-national identity. Paradoxically, their marginalisation has led them to identify a strong sense of belonging to Brazil (ibid.: 202-203). Such experiences of *Nikkei-jin*

have come to form a diasporic imagined community through samba carnivals (ibid.). This collective expression of culture assumes certain qualities of diaspora with a communal recognition of *Nikkei* Latin Americans. As seen in this case, a relocation to another society gives rise to a migrant subjectivity.

In the post-war context, the Japanese who moved overseas, even if temporarily, similarly tend to develop their sense affinity with Japan through migration experiences (Ben-Ari 2003; Thang *et al.* 2006). However, the ideas of Japaneseness are context specific and are variously constructed in favour of their own emphasis on a certain aspect of identity. For example, Japanese wives depicted in the study of Kurotani (2005) define Japaneseness as women's responsibility to protect the *uchi* boundary in the foreign environment. Kelsky's (2006) participants cite Japaneseness in a way that contrasts Japanese cultural virtues with Western individualism. For the participants with whom Fujita (2009) worked, Japaneseness equates to Japanese moral values identified in the discourse of *nihonjinron*. Whether Japaneseness is referred to in relation to gender, culture or ethnicity, common among these works is the fact that role-oriented social relationships have been reconfigured as a resource of Japaneseness. This cultural form of transnational language has contributed to creating a Japanese migrant subjectivity.

Simultaneously, Japanese people engaged in the processes of identity through migration experience heterogeneous processes of identification. Japanese migrants' resistance to a homogenous East Asian subjectivity is reported by Fujita (2009). Similarly, migrants' new establishing positionality is negotiated in association with class, status and language ability (Machimura 2003). A distinctive role of migration precisely lies in its

capacity to embrace both heterogeneous and unifying processes of identities. This aspect of migration is documented in the work of several scholars, in which Japanese youths living abroad are depicted as developing a sense of Japaneseness, as well as transnational identity (Fujita 2009; Kato 2010; Matsui 1995; Sato 2001). Whilst these works imply that competing orientations of going global and developing a sense of Japaneseness work hand-in-hand and that migration serves to underline the processes of (re)constructing Japanese identities, they do not address the implications of the roles that migration plays in developing a Japanese national, ethnic, gender and class consciousness nor reflect upon the temporal dimension of their participants' migration experiences. It is an important area of scholarly examination that the (re)construction of identities through migration in fact constitutes a part of the process of formulating the discourse of Japaneseness. In order to provide an insight into the complex realities embedded in the experiences of migration, the following ethnographic chapters examine the ways in which temporary migration affects the processes of identity marking amongst my participants.

Chapter Four: In search of a better lifestyle: Japanese women and men in Dublin

My participants had travelled to Dublin on a temporary visa – either a student, working holiday or lay volunteer visa. For working holiday makers, applicants were expected to provide proof of being able to afford living expenses while in Dublin. This suggests that working holiday makers were expected not to be in need of employment upon their arrival in the country. Similarly, degree-/students were allowed to work only up to 20 hours per week. Given that their primary objective was not focused on earning money, their reasons for travelling to Dublin were of interest to me. Apparently, learning English was an important factor for them. The majority were non-degree students who were eager to explore a life overseas, yet who had no specific purpose or visions about their life orientation. Apart from those who had come to Dublin with the concrete objective of acquiring cultural capital, in most cases the participants had remained vague about what their *ikigai* might be. Therefore, the questions that I want to explore in this chapter are how their lives in Japan primarily served to facilitate their travel to Dublin and how it was interrelated with the transformations of their identities. Through exploring the initial stage of their migration, I will consider the intersection of migration and gender. The phenomenon of migrating Japanese women has become significant since the 1980s as I discussed in Chapter Three. Given the fact that there were nearly three times as many Japanese women as men travelling to Dublin amongst the people whom I interviewed, the issue of gender needs to be considered in some detail. In this chapter, I will detail the representative narratives of three women and two men so as to present some of the diverse trajectories of Japanese people's journeys to Dublin. The

various impetuses underlying their moves to Dublin will highlight how the Japanese youths with whom I spoke shaped their life courses in relation to gendered roles. Following the examination of their narratives, I will draw links and note the differences that shaped the choices made by Japanese men and women in starting their lives as migrants.

Ayaka: a sense of accomplishment

Ayaka was a 27-year-old working holiday maker. She was a sociable yet polite person, always offering me and other people senior to her a better seat in the cafés and restaurants that we visited. Ayaka, who had been living in Dublin for seven months by then, spoke of her life in Japan and explained why she had come to Dublin. "It's not because I wasn't content with my life or that I felt uncomfortable living in Japan, but because I wanted to try something different in my life." She enunciated the need to reframe her life objectives after she had accomplished her goal of getting into a Japanese airline company. Prior to her job at the airline company as a member of the ground staff, she had worked at a foreign hotel as a full-time employee for ten months. She chose these two jobs because the exposure to an English-speaking environment that both jobs offered would help her move forward in her plan to live abroad. Her desire to live abroad was first motivated by contact with an Irish homestay student whom her family had hosted when she was a high school student. Ever since then, she retained her aspirations of living abroad and learning English. For this reason, although a career in the airline industry was her dream, she had planned on staying with the company only for three years and then to move abroad, preferably to an English-speaking country,

afterwards. And indeed, after three years of working for the airline company, she had discarded a promising career so as to realise her dream while Japan remained in the grips of recession. “I needed to leave the country because I had done everything I had wanted to try in Japan,” explained Ayaka.

Aside from her father’s absence from home due to the fact that he had been transferred by his company to work a few hundred miles away from his family, she had led a normal life. Ayaka was from a middle-class white collar family and had grown up in several places around the Tokyo metropolitan area. Having completed an undergraduate programme in Tokyo, she obtained a job in the service sector. Subsequently she got her dream job with an airline. The achievement of her career goal of ‘working for an airline company’ built up her self-confidence but simultaneously blurred the focus of her life once it was achieved. Throughout countless conversations with Ayaka, she often verbalised the key phrase ‘typical Japanese,’ when referring to herself as being one of those people who were vague about their life orientation and goals.[1] After seven months of staying in Dublin, she was still unsure what she would do in her life. Simultaneously, however, she seemed proud of her ability not to follow the normative life course as her peers did. “If I hadn’t been strong enough to yearn for independence, I already would have been married in Japan.” She implied that marriage was a practical and normative means to attain happiness and gain financial security. It was time to move on to the next stage of her life. Because her job at the airline company involved dealing with foreigners and using English on a daily basis, going abroad in anticipation

[1] For Ayaka, this phrase had multiple, both negative and positive connotations: one use for the phrase was indecisiveness, which was used in a situation when I could not decide where to have dinner; it also implied a form of humility or politeness that enforced her to do things against her will. Her view of the Japanese and their behaviour will be further explored in Chapter Five and Seven.

of a career improvement appeared to be an obvious option. When she had left Japan seven months previously, she was determined to stay abroad as long as possible.

Such an attitude was reflected in the way that she had found employment in Dublin. She had come to Dublin with enough savings to live on for at least one year, but to my knowledge, she had had three part-time jobs during her stay in Dublin. The first job at a Japanese restaurant did not last long. She explained that the Japanese women with whom she had worked had created a closed group amongst themselves. "Far from supporting their fellow Japanese, they were inhospitable to newcomers like myself, pulling each other down." She was amazed at the disunity and the way a hierarchy had been constructed within such a micro community, i.e. the duration of one's stay and whether or not having a steady Caucasian boyfriend appeared to determine one's degree of worth or respect, neither of which she had at the time. As a result of the dysfunctional relationship between the co-workers there was much stress and this caused her eczema to worsen, so she left the job after a few months. She then went on to her current job as an au pair that paid her a very small salary in addition to free accommodation and food. Child-caring had little to do with her previous career. She continued: "I don't mind looking after children. I was actually interested in child-caring. I love children and the kids I'm taking care of are very adorable. Experience is what counts. I wanted to try anything new."

Given the limited jobs for Japanese young people in Dublin, an au pair job was one of the few options available to her when she was about to give up on getting a new job after quitting part-time employment at the restaurant. Although she confessed that she

had not been getting on well with the host mother of the family either, the family were instrumental in improving her English, correcting grammatical mistakes and she found it beneficial to live with locals as a way to gain firsthand experience of living abroad. A weekly allowance of one-hundred Euros sufficed to cover her social expenses on her days off. A few months after the first interview, she quit the au pair job and got a waitressing job at an Irish pub in the city centre. The new job kept her busy but was well paid. Yet, for Ayaka, money was not an issue. She perceived all of what she had gone through in a foreign place – a new job, a new life with foreigners on a low income – as precious and priceless (*iikeiken*). "I never imagined that I would do a waitress' job. The job is tough but fun." She told me one day.

In our second interview, Ayaka remarked: "In fact, another reason for coming here was to find a possible future partner [*'konkatsu'*[2] *shi ni kimashita*]." She spoke of the popularity and omnipresence of bi-racial models and showbiz people occupying the Japanese media scene,[3] and expressed her vague aspiration to have a bi-racial child with big eyes. "Perhaps I'm just being manipulated by the media but," she added, "my dream is to have such a 'half' child in the future." Her experience of having a crush on a Swiss boy while she was home-staying in Australia had developed into the hope for an interracial marriage. She went on to explain that she was deeply influenced by her mother who had made her feel that she had been ugly and had inculcated in her the idea

[2] The term *Konkatsu* is the abbreviated word for *kekkon* (marriage) and *katudō* (activity), coined by the sociologist Yamada. It refers to the marriage-seeking activities of single men and women (Yamada and Shirakawa 2008). This term became so popular that it has entered the everyday vocabulary of Japanese.

[3] Those bi/multi-racial people are normally referred to as 'half (*hāfu*)' in Japan, preferably with Caucasian backgrounds.

that if she married a Western man, her future children would inherit better genes and be able to get rid of her ugly features. She came to realise that her aspirations of having a good command of English, living abroad and having a 'half' child were largely derived from her mother's own longing for such a life. Although she had refused to follow the path that her peers had taken, marriage and child-rearing were an integral part of a picture of her future and embodied the idea that household chores were women's work. Despite the fact that Ayaka had been dating a Caucasian American man at the time of interview, her remark about marriage did not take on any reality while she was a waitress working on a temporary visa. "I still can't picture my future or how I want to make a living. I don't even know where I will be this time next year but I enjoy my life here." She was managing the hectic part-time job while studying to take the Cambridge English Language Assessment examination.

Nodoka: temporary independence from family

Nodoka at the age of 27, was also a female working holiday maker. I met Nodoka at a house party hosted by a young Japanese male expatriate in late May. Although she had been in Dublin over eight months by then, I had not met her before I joined the small gathering that the expatriate had named 'Japan night.' Nodoka told me that she had attended the meetup once but found no one with whom she wanted to be friends. She had already built her network of friends, primarily through her Japanese housemates and the part-time job that she had recently started. Nodoka's part-time job as a maid (bed-making) in a hostel in the city centre seemed to provide her with adequate social contact with non-Japanese people. Otherwise, she would have found herself in a

network of Japanese all the time. Even so, she did not mind being surrounded by Japanese, because she did not aim to 'live' in Dublin but just hoped to experience the taste of living abroad through eating local food and seeing a different culture with her own eyes. On the day I interviewed her in a fancy Mexican restaurant, she had just finished her shift at the hostel.

Despite her baby face, Nodoka had a mature, poised demeanour and used *keigo*. Nodoka, a registered nurse, had worked for four years at a hospital close to her hometown of Gifu. She was 26 years old when she decided to realise the dream that she had had since she was a university student. "I had a dream of living abroad though I was never good at English even in my school days." She talked with a beaming smile while we were sharing vegetable and beef fajitas. She began to aspire to 'being able to speak English' when she watched Nakata Hidetoshi (a football player who played in Italy and England from 1998 to 2006) on television being interviewed without the help of a translator. The image of Nakata with a strong command of a foreign language spurred her on to fulfil her dream, although English was irrelevant to her career as a nurse.

In fact, Nodoka had never left the country until her second year as a nurse. It was in 2007 that she made her first visit abroad – to Hawaii – with three undergraduate classmates. But this touristic experience left her disappointed, particularly when she found out that everywhere she visited in Hawaii had Japanese speakers. She recalled: "I was so frustrated to be honest. Because I had bothered to go to a foreign country, but it wasn't to see Japanese speakers in shopping centres." Whilst the experience in Hawaii was far from what she had expected of a foreign country, it made her even more curious

to learn about other cultures. Upon her return home, she started to learn English at a local English language school. “I wanted to get basic English skills, enough to converse with people when I went abroad.” She had become painfully aware of her lack of English proficiency during the trip. When asked if she was concerned about interrupting her career as she was entering into her fourth year as a nurse, a senior position, she responded: “What’s good about my occupation is that re-employment is very easy. There is always a demand for nurses, so I didn’t worry about what I would do afterwards, because I can go back to the same work whenever I want.” Having said that, going overseas never became an option for her until she found herself “at a dead end in life.” She found herself having to deal with huge stress from work after four years. Her patients did not listen to her instructions and she felt under a lot of pressure while training younger nurses. “I thought it was time to have a break and realise my dream, so,” she smiled even wider, “I came here to ‘rest my wings’.”

Nodoka never shared the idea of going abroad, not even with her parents until she eventually made up her mind six months prior to her departure. She said: “I promised my parents that I would come back within a year. There is a deadline for this freedom. Another reason why I wanted to go abroad is that I wanted to be free from my parents’ surveillance temporarily.” She indicated that she had an ambivalent relationship with her parents. Her hometown Gifu was located in the very middle of the main island of Japan. Nodoka was born to parents who worked as civil servants; one a teacher and the other a worker at city hall. Her younger brother was, as she put it “living freely without being committed to the family as much.” In her small hometown, she never really felt free because there were always people who kept an eye on her and reported her

behaviour in school to her parents. She felt that she was always expected to behave since she was small:

> Perhaps this is why I couldn't share what I really thought with my parents. I couldn't express my real feelings until junior high-school age, because I never thought my opinion would be valued over that of my respectable parents. Now that I am an adult, I can have an honest dialogue with my parents. But still, it feels that I can't trouble them and that I have to be a good child to them…I chose my current accommodation [where there are many Japanese tenants] because I wanted to assure them of my safety.

To my question if it meant that she had felt constrained by her parents, she responded: "No, rather I am willing to behave in the way they expect of me. But a bird in a cage sometimes needs fresh air." Her level of independence was proportional to the physical distance from her family. Her undergraduate education was completed a few hundred miles away from her hometown, where she enjoyed being away from her parents' prying eyes. The degree of relief and freedom that she had in Dublin was akin to the autonomy that she had enjoyed during her university years. She added that she missed her parents but found great pleasure in "staying outside of the cage."

Before moving to Dublin, Nodoka had headed off to Brighton in the U.K.. She explained that it was a safer option not to make her family, her mother in particular – whom Nodoka described as both overprotective and the most and only trustworthy person in the world – worry about her safety in a foreign country as Ireland was still an unfamiliar country for most Japanese. Because the travel agency that she had initially contracted went bankrupt one month after her arrival in the U.K., she sought a means to

remain in Europe, preferably in an English-speaking region. “Any English-speaking region was fine for me.” She had had neither an interest in nor emotional attachment to Ireland before she moved to Dublin, but had successfully obtained an Irish working holiday visa. When one year or so had passed in Dublin, she found living abroad to be quite enjoyable and still had enough savings on which to live. She discussed with her mother her plan to prolong her stay a little more. Due to all the changes in her plans, the promise to her parents that she would return home within a year was adjusted on the condition that she would come home within the next six months. On the one hand, Nodoka felt sorry for her family because her relocation to a foreign land had troubled them. On the other hand, her life abroad was a precious independent period before she returned to reality and family:

> As my hometown is in the countryside, my father is expecting me to find a husband who will marry into my family and succeed to it as heir. As I simply love cooking and taking care of people, I want to marry someday just like everybody else. But looking at my family, marriage doesn’t seem to be of great merit…My motto is ‘to live my life on my own’ [with emotional and financial independence].

In light of the fact that a strong preference for a male heir is still prevalent in Japanese society, her father’s expectation of her to succeed to her *ie* was somewhat unusual. She went on to explain that as her younger brother, who had moved out to a city, had little interest in family affairs, her father turned to Nodoka as heir. To accommodate her father’s wishes meant succeeding to her *ie* and living with her parents in their old age. Though this was nonetheless her father’s vague hope, she seemed to recognise her responsibility to her family. Simultaneously, she seemed reluctant to marry immediately. This was partly due to Nodoka's having imagined her grandmother and mother to be

patient and submissive women who both had great tolerance for their partners' money problems. For her, marriage was directly linked to the idea of submitting to the husband. She stressed the importance of maintaining financial independence, even if a change in marital status came along in the future. Her career as a nurse certainly would promise this. Before re-settling down with the previous career, she enjoyed the fleeting freedom in Dublin. The experience in Dublin was rewarding in this sense. Also, the way she communicated with her Irish landlord and with waitresses while having dinner in the restaurant, proved that she seemed to have achieved the level of English proficiency that she desired.

Megumi: for a fresh start in life

Megumi was 34 years old, working as a care worker in Cheshire Homes Ireland which was situated on the edge of the expansive Dublin's Phoenix Park. She was the only work permit holder among the participants. Born and raised in a town north of Tokyo, she had spent all her life there until the age of 26. Her father was a taxi driver and her mother, a part-time worker at a distribution company offering books to school libraries. Megumi, the youngest of two children, was urged to become financially independent in her teenage years. She told me that during her high school days, out of curiosity, she worked in a hostess club[4] to earn money while lying about her age. As studying was never to her liking, she entered the workforce immediately upon graduating from high school and got a full-time job at the Tobu Department store in Ikebukuro, which was

[4] Allison argues in her book *Night Work: Sexuality, Pleasure, and Corporate Masculinity Tokyo Hostess Club* (1994: 22) that the hostess club is characterised as providing not sexual services but conversations in which men are able to feel like "a powerful, desirable male."

only a ten minute train journey from her home. Along with a sales job in the women's clothing section of the department store, her tasks included writing calligraphy on the wrapping paper called '*noshi* paper,' for gifts that customers bought. After a few years of working for the Tobu Department store, Megumi changed her job to become an expert *noshi* paper calligrapher at the Takashimaya Department store in Nihonbashi, specifically writing gift cards for such presents as towels and bed linen. Megumi was 24 years old when she got married to a man 12 years senior to her. Having worked since the age of 18, marriage as young as 24 did not seem to be a reckless decision. Their marriage, however, ended within two years. In the course of arguments over whether or not, and when to have children, the husband told her that "a body with the inability to have children is useless," when she had difficulty conceiving. He, as the only son in his natal family, pressured her to have children as soon as possible. It was at that moment that Megumi decided to bring the relationship to an end.

The divorce process involving money issues beleaguered Megumi and her parents. Her mother had previously lent Megumi's soon-to-be-ex-husband one million yen (approximately equivalent to 7,000 GBP) as a deposit for the couple's flat, which he refused to return on the grounds that he was officially remaining in the same family unit as her. This dispute was eventually taken to court. Though her parents did not involve Megumi in this lawsuit between her mother and her ex, Megumi was on the verge of breaking down while watching her parents suffer because of her personal matter. She thought: "I'll go somewhere for a little while when this case is over." And so she started thinking about leaving Japan to refresh her mind. Her parents, seeing Megumi mentally wrecked, encouraged her to go abroad without waiting for the lawsuit to end. Going

overseas by joining the Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers or as some form of volunteer, was a dream that she had held for a long time. Especially after her mother had become ill six years previously, Megumi had started to develop a particular interest in volunteering. Such an idea, however, had been no more than a fleeting dream for married Megumi. One day, while the case was still continuing, she saw a poster advertising volunteer work in Cheshire Homes in the U.K. and her old dream started to take on a realistic tone.

> Everywhere I went in Tokyo, there were memories of life with him. Even at my place [after the divorce], when receiving mails or seeing my seal in the drawer, I would find my old name, his family name, in those things. Every time I saw the remnants of his shadow, I felt like I was being held back by the past…What saddened me more was that the whole experience of divorce made so much trouble for my parents. My family and relatives were incredibly supportive of me, but my having got divorced within two years made me ashamed to see them and face the *seken*…I thought I couldn't continue living in the same place any longer. To move on, I wanted to leave…I didn't have any confidence about how things would turn out. But one thing was certain that things could only get better, like climbing from the bottom, from zero to one, two, three.

Megumi first went to Yorkshire in the U.K. on a one-year visa to work as a live-in volunteer for the Cheshire Homes. Although she had great difficulty in learning English since her English vocabulary was "almost next to nothing," she enjoyed her new life and arranged a half an hour of study time in the late afternoon with another Japanese volunteer staff who taught her basic English grammar. When her volunteer visa was about to expire, she learnt that there was a branch of the Cheshire Homes in Ireland. With the hope that it would allow her to stay oversea one more year, Megumi came to Dublin in 2004, again living in and working at the Cheshire Homes as a volunteer.

Megumi met Seán, a co-worker there, and she soon developed a romantic relationship with him. There was also Marie, a physically disabled resident of Cara Cheshire House, who became another influential figure in Megumi's life in Dublin. Their relationship, which Megumi described as "a pseudo-parental relationship," started right after Megumi moved from Yorkshire to Dublin. Marie taught Megumi everything about the Cara Cheshire House routines where Marie had spent most of her life. Marie's dream was to live on her own, away from the Cheshire House before she died. Megumi, as a carer and also because of their close friendship, was concerned about Marie's dream of independence as she was already in her sixties. So Megumi decided to help Marie to realise her dream. Megumi at this time had her own rented flat but she helped Marie in her nearby flat nearly every day. Two years after Marie realised her dream with the great help of Megumi, she passed away and Megumi bought the most expensive coffin she could for her:

> Marie lived in a wheelchair throughout her life but I believe that she is now in heaven living free and in peace. Seán too. After a long time of struggling, he finally found his peace. They don't need to suffer anymore, and I know I will meet them again when my time comes. "Well done! (*yokatta ne*)" I said to them…Last year two clients passed away. Death is part of my life here. One of the many things I learnt through life here is that death doesn't just bring sorrow but also relief and peace.

Although it took her a while to bounce back from their sequential deaths, she found solace in the support given by her colleagues, friends and her new boyfriend, through which her sense of belonging in Ireland was reinforced.

Women's constraints: marriage, family and work

My participants had left Japan to begin a new life, even if temporarily, but their reasons for moving to Dublin were as diverse as their personal backgrounds. As seen in the narratives, the decisions to go to Dublin were made in an attempt to establish a new way of living beyond familial and social constraints. Their stories contextualise the multiplicity of lifestyles that Japanese youths today embrace.

"I am a misfit in Japan" was a common phrase that I often heard from my participants. Although my female participants' narratives provided varying rationales for their move to Dublin, the sense of being a misfit – a lack of sense of belonging to society and various sorts of constraints – became the impetus to leave their local lives behind. Indeed, their sense of alienation and the strength to break free from what they felt were their predicaments were two sides of the same coin. Typically, migration experiences of Japanese women of my participants' age are analysed in female students' experiences in Western higher education (Andressen and Kumagai 1996; Habu 2000; Ichimoto 2004; Matsui 1995). Though these are analysed primarily through the eyes of young single women from urban middle and upper class backgrounds, a common theme in this body of literature is that overseas study is undertaken not only to pursue educational opportunities and international experiences but also is a result of the desire to escape expectations for Japanese women. This parallels White's (2003: 93) case study of Japanese women in London which discusses women's desire for freedom from social expectations and their aspiration to acquire cosmopolitan characteristics by living in

Western destinations.

The pressure to marry is one reason for the travel of these student sanctions, and it was also true for my participants. If work is a primary resource of *ikigai* for Japanese men as Mathews (2004) argues and as I will consider later in this chapter, Japanese women's gender identity essentially lies in the domestic arena of constructing and maintaining the household. As I discussed in Chapter Three, post-war Japan's industrialisation is built on a gendered division in social roles, assigning people into a specific social space: ideally men play the role of primary financial provider for households and women stay in the household being in charge of household chores and child-rearing (Dasgupta 2010: 192; see also Hidaka 2010). Even though becoming a full-time housewife is merely a middle-class ideal, marriage and its pertaining roles are deeply interwoven into women's life courses.

The norm that equated womanhood with "marriage and childrearing" (Goldstein-Gidoni 2012: 205) was internalised, to a degree, as displayed by those participants over the age of 30 when they defined themselves in cynical tones as 'being a *makeinu* (loser) in the Japanese sense' for being single. These women primarily identified their life orientation in work, despite holding vague hopes to marry at some later stage in life. In light of the average age for first marriage for women being 29.2 in 2012 as I described in the previous chapter, the mean age of my female participants was 30. It follows that they were of marriageable age. Also, except for one degree-student, all of my female participants had at least three years of work experience in Japan. Adding to this scope, Habu (2000: 55-58) hints at the importance of life stage that creates diverse intentions to

travel overseas. In her study of Japanese women in British higher education, Habu (ibid) notes that whilst the travel of her younger participants in their late teens and early twenties was motivated by career aspirations, older participants took the opportunity to study abroad as a means of not only improving career prospects but also of escaping the expectations of family regarding marriage and career. Although Habu has not further reflected on the implications of this difference in migration patterns, an indication that the migration of the women of marriageable age was interrelated with the social expectations of Japanese women can be found. They were self-reliant, financially independent, living on the money they had accumulated while in Japan. Hiromi's voice captured the idea of the way in which single women felt isolated in Japanese society. Hiromi, a 37-year-old student (later married to an Irishman) remarked:

> By my late twenties, I found myself to be the only singleton left in my group of friends. Everybody was married and I had no one to hang out with because they were so occupied with family affairs. So I was left with no choice but to go somewhere on my own during the holidays. I started travelling abroad alone and the more I went overseas, the more I wanted to stay there.

This statement shows that she had been unable to maintain a sense of belonging in the job that she had held for over a decade or in the circumstances where marital status served to shape some degree of women's identity. Hiromi's attitude towards a self-orientated lifestyle framed their rejection of the marriage-centred life courses that still pervade Japanese public discourse today. Ayaka's sense of deviation and her desire to be independent were similarly marked by her single status. Expectations held of these women about engaging in the production and maintenance of a family were at odds with the independent lifestyles that they wished to pursue. In fact, despite the fact that some

participants, as in the cases of Ayaka, Megumi and Hiromi, developed relationships with Irish or other European men, an association with white men was not a central concern for the majority of my female participants, nor did marriage play a dominant role in influencing their life courses. Though many expressed the desire to marry at some point in life, it was the gap between the social expectations to marry imposed on Japanese women and the multiplicity of contemporary lifestyles available to them that facilitated Japanese women's travel. In a similar vein, social pressure on women to meet the dominant ideals of womanhood, i.e. being a wife and mother, were correspondingly linked to their leaving Japan. In the case of Megumi, she implicitly stated that leaving Japan was an escape from a locality imbued with memories of her ex-husband. As she had built her life in the capital city Tokyo, another domestic move was not a pragmatic option for her.[5] As was the case in Megumi, there is a tendency that the failure to live up to social expectations, as represented by singlehood, divorcement or widowhood, often prompts the transnational movement of Japanese women (Thang *et al*. 2012: 250).

Family relationships were another aspect of women's experiences of constraint, or conversely of alienation, that incited action. Nine of my participants referred to difficult relationships with their families. These participants presented two opposing experiences of the family: one was a refusal to conform to the pervasive norm of the *ie*. As Nodoka's narrative suggested, she had lived her life mostly in an effort to get along with her family, choosing her occupation following her father's suggestion. Although she stated that nursing was a job that guaranteed financial independence and that she found it beneficial to follow the path for her own sake, she equally wanted to make use

[5] Many of my participants had experienced domestic migration, i.e., from their hometown in rural areas to urban cities such as Tokyo and Osaka, prior to their move to Dublin (cf. Castles and Miller 2003).

of her nursing skills for her family "to protect [them] in case something happened." Simultaneously, Nodoka's latent discontent with her family's expectations developed into her desire to be independent of the psychological constraints she had felt about her familial responsibilities. Indeed, she was willing to perform her role as a possible heir and cared about her family, but the physical distance from them represented her desire to own her life. Another female participant Yukiko, a 32-year-old student, also related to me a similar story. Though she had kept strong ties to her family, which were rather significantly reinforced by her parents' divorce, going overseas was a form of self-realisation, removing the constraints of the moral commitments to her family. Since her family was not well-off, Yukiko always found herself having to create financial stability and prioritise it over her dream to study abroad. Looking after her grandfather, who had leukaemia, also forced her to remain in the family unit. But after her grandfather passed away, she decided to realise her dream. She said: "He used to say that you can only do the things you want to do while being in good health, and this gave a boost to do things I wanted to do." After moving to Dublin, she felt that being in Dublin created a comfortable distance between her older sister in particular who, out of the fear of a breakup in the family again, had nagged her endlessly to return. She showed no hesitation in staying overseas for the long term.

The other perspective on family relationships was that some participants significantly lacked a sense of belonging to their family. 25-year-old Ai, a working holiday maker, was one such example. She had an unhappy childhood and therefore tended to be reticent about her family. Her father, who had physically abused her, was unfavourably dismissed in the discussion about her family. She stated: "I only have an older brother

to rely on." She had wealthy parents as well as older and younger brothers but always omitted the rest of the family members when referring to her family background. Her sense of rootlessness and insecurity underpinned her motivation to become independent. Her independent-minded attitude was also translated into her intense resistance to just lead an easy life and the desire to do something meaningful with her life.

In contrast to these participants who had felt constrained to fulfil both their commitment to their families and social expectations regarding marriage, the sense of accomplishment that my participants attained through work also set the scene for the next stages of their lives as we saw with Ayaka. Behind the common phrase of "I just wanted to go abroad," there was a desire to extricate themselves from the monotonous life that their peers followed. Resisting leading expected life courses, my participants sought for a better life abroad. In a sense, a life overseas was synonymous with a remedy for the boredom of such a lifestyle. Ayaka, Nodoka and Otone's responses reflected their mode of resistance to an expected life course broadly framed by career prospects. Indeed, quite a few women among the participants had left promising careers before coming to Dublin. In the case of Ayaka, although she seldom referred to her father and younger brother, she kept a relatively good relationship with her family, particularly with her mother to such an extent that her mother visited her in Dublin. Whilst being profoundly influenced by her mother's way of thinking, her family was identified as a source of emotional security for her. Nonetheless, she opted to leave her family and Japan for the sake of self-advancement. Similar to Ayaka, Otone's decision-making epitomised one way of achieving an independent lifestyle without confining herself to the expected obligations and loyalty towards family and work.

Otone aged 40, the oldest participant who had come to Dublin on a student visa, was pursuing her dream of becoming a professional therapist. She recalled: "I desperately wanted to have vocational skills; not the kind of clerical job that I had done throughout my working life. Rather something in the service sector that contributes to others' happiness was what I wanted to do." Having worked as a *haken* for periodic visits to Ireland for many years, she finally enrolled in the diploma course in order to gain vocational skills and fulfil her dream of living in Ireland for a longer period of time. These women's desires reflected a more flexible, less stigmatised women's working style. For them, what mattered was the creation of a rewarding life that did not always bring monetary success or career advancement. The prevalent sense of stagnation and of having little commitment to their Japanese workplace, which perhaps were mutual influences, turned into a positive force that led them to leave the mainstream career treadmill.

What was evident was that there was little sense amongst my participants that a self-fulfilment could be sought within Japanese society. My female participants were those who were unable to develop a sense of personal fulfilment through marriage, family or jobs, and desired to seek it beyond these social establishments. They therefore demonstrated a more independent mind-set with the assumption that Japanese society was, despite it being home to them, no longer the place they felt they fitted into. The pursuit of an independent way of life meant putting at risk the security that could have been granted by a stable income or marriage. The feelings of isolation and frustration arising from their experience of various social establishments contributed to their move to a foreign place in order to search for a new life as well as a new sense of belonging.

International travel was thus undertaken as a progressive step to cultivate or to achieve a form of self-realisation.

Women's migration as emancipation and empowerment

Gender is another perspective from which to look at migrant experience. Migration is practised differently by men and women. Women's migration has been typically discussed in relation to their labour and domestic role. Coinciding with the global trends of the feminisation of migration, in the context of East and Southeast Asia, economic growth and the resulting women's participation in the labour market since the 1980s brought a rise in labour demand for traditionally female jobs such as domestic work and jobs in the service sectors. This led to labour migration dominated by women within Asia (Castles and Miller 2003: 161). Also, the roles played by women acknowledge distinctive differences in migrant experience. Women are often portrayed as the symbolic representation of nation and ethnic ideologies (Anthias 1998: 71). Since women's roles are primarily defined by their relations to the households in patriarchal societies, it is women's roles to transmit their ethnic heritage. Therefore, women's roles persistently underpin the processes of the social and biological reproduction of family and nation.

However, single, educated, middle-class women seeking upward mobility characterise the recent patterns of women's migration.[6] In the Japanese context, individual-based

[6] For instance, the Filipino middle-class women in the study of Limpangog (2013) draw on their high levels of capital to migrate, in order to secure their class status, seek further economic advancement or pursue self-centred interests for lifestyle migration.

migration to foreign realms, particularly to the West, has been predominantly dominated by women. They seek self-realisation outside of their expected economic and domestic roles. What was evident was that my women's migration was significantly interrelated with social expectations about women's domesticity. The Japanese term *uchi* connoting 'family,' 'home' as well as 'inside,' enunciates spatial intimacy and a familiarity established from shared experience and togetherness within a particular social space. Given a gendered division of social roles which assign women primarily an *uchi* social space in post-war Japan, much of the responsibility of constructing, protecting and inheriting the *uchi* falls on women's shoulders. The existing literature documents that regardless of the location of *uchi*, Japanese women's roles are primarily defined by their relation to the households so that the reproduction of ethnic heritages in the domestic space becomes the utmost concern for married Japanese women, including those living abroad (Befu and Stalker 1996; Kurotani 2005).

In addition to domesticity as women's primary role, OLs' lack of career progression is related to women's migration. As opposed to men who inherently belong to the *uchi* sphere, women's sense of being *soto* is deeply intertwined with the Japanese patriarchal systems (Kelsky 2001: 8-9). Since the 1980s Japanese women began to question their normative allegiance to the social ideals requiring them to put society, family and jobs first. The work of Andressen and Kumagai (1996), Habu (2000), Kato (2010), Kawashima (2010), Matsui (1995), Mizukami (2007) and Nagatomo (2015) also recognise that the persistent feminine domesticity and limited career prospects in the labour market often become a ground for women's incentives to travel abroad. The resulting desire for a change of profession is tied to upward mobility amongst

middle-class women. For this reason, Japanese men who travel in this form are far less common and their migrant experiences have therefore been considerably less explored.

For my participants travelling to Dublin was a pragmatic solution to limited life choices within Japanese patriarchy. Exploring new opportunities in Dublin was carried out as part of a reflexive project of the self (Giddens 1991). This reflexive process of biography (Beck 1992) led them to 'the West' where they saw it as a "liberating foreign realm" that allowed new ways of life and could bring freedom from the straitjacket of Japanese normative social and gender expectations (Kelsky 2001: 3). Young single women resort to their marginal position in Japanese society to exercise the freedom to move abroad. From this view, my participants were no different. Dublin was imagined as the cosmopolitanism of the West where they were able to escape from the usual expectations for Japanese women and exercise their individual autonomy for their life courses.

Their yearning to make 'a new self' was analogous with the search for a sense of belonging, new roles and identities. As part of these processes, my participants grappled with a wide range of activities in Dublin. Temporary migrants typically enthusiastically engage in activities intended to enhance capital in order to survive and prolong their stay in their destination (Robertson 2014: 1927-1928). Prior to travelling to Dublin, most of the women had had a stable job. However, instead of looking for financial stability in life, indeed at the sacrifice of full-time positions as in the cases of the women described, the option of living abroad appealed to their desire to re-route their life journeys through re-location overseas. Acknowledging that their primary pursuit

was self-fulfilment in the context of a foreign realm where they were able to embrace personal freedom, they engaged in activities that they had not had the opportunity to do in Japan, such as travelling around Europe, making foreign friends, experiencing a new job, and learning English; all of these were believed to be a way of making life rewarding and cultivating cultural capital. They demonstrated their eagerness to maximise their chances of gaining new experiences and engaging in local society. The women's active involvement in local life was reflected in their part-time job. Except for one work permit holder, 70 per cent of the women (18 out of 26) obtained a casual job such as choices as cleaners, waitresses or child-minders with a view to developing their English ability and extending their social networks. For these women, as characterised in Ayaka's and Nodoka's cases, an active involvement in low-skill jobs did not suggest a career enhancement but was taken as being more about trying out new, different experiences abroad. Ayaka's comment that she never had the intention of taking a waitress job for a living was typical and implied that such low-skill jobs were not considered as being a part of their career development but rather as experimental and temporary challenges permissible only in a foreign context.

Indeed, apart from two women who spoke explicitly about the motives for their career changes, my participants' narratives provided no grounds for interlinking their transnational moves with future career success. This stance was quite different to life decisions that centre on career planning as discussed in earlier studies on Japanese migrants. For instance, Kelsky (2001; 2008) depicts Japanese professional women's desire to pursue upward mobility through full participation in the urban white-corporate world. Confronted with the difficulty of gaining equal footing with men in the Japanese

workplace, her participants sought better opportunities in the perceived cosmopolitan West. Therefore, working abroad has been taken as an option for exploring the "limitless space of the foreign," a new way of life, a test of their abilities in an extension of a career-focused life (2001: 106). As part of career advancement, English proficiency is widely recognised as needed for women's advancement (Kelsky 2001: 101), which consequently contributes to their class mobility and opens up future career opportunities as an interpreter or working for foreign firms (ibid.: 100). Hence, going abroad has been considered a strategic move that leads to climbing the social ladder. Although this paradigm applies to my participants to some degree, career advancement as well as learning English were rather seen to be a supplemental rationale for living in Dublin and were rarely the primary motives.

There were several participants, with a growing recognition that mastery of English was an investment in the future, who strove to make themselves marketable by having the advantage of the command of a foreign language. Nonetheless, most of the participants assumed that it would not directly open up more job opportunities. Therefore, in contrast to the previous studies that relate women's migration to career change based on the acquisition of English skills, my women's motivation for learning English provided a convincing justification for staying abroad rather than a primary impetus that facilitated their transnational mobility. For most of my female participants, travelling to the West, being able to speak English and getting connected to the Irish were a means to get them affiliated with the West. The socially unmarked space of Dublin became a site of cosmopolitan expression that allowed for the enhancement of cultural capital.

In this way, Japanese women's reasons for migrating to Dublin revealed their experience of the dilemmas relating to the workplace, family and Japanese gender ideals. Then, how are men's trajectories to Dublin different from those of women? The following sections focus on Japanese men's experiences of the transnational move to Dublin. In light of the small ratio of Japanese men (eight participants) to that of women, I have to be cautious in my analysis of their practice of going overseas in comparison to Japanese men in general. Nevertheless, their narratives are worth examining in order to consider some aspects of Japanese men's life courses.

Jun: a road to self-advancement

Jun, a 25-year-old working holiday maker, was from Osaka, the third largest prefecture in Japan. Because he had failed his university entrance examinations, he went to a two-year college, and then transferred to the Kyoto University of Foreign Studies where he majored in English. He had a passion for English not as a simple conversational tool with foreigners but more as a means to enable him to convey Japanese culture to outsiders. For this reason, he realised the necessity of learning more about his country first, and became deeply intrigued by her war history and religion more than the subject of English itself. During his university days, much of his study was focussed on learning about Japan.

During a job search, Jun figured out that he was not getting any job offers before graduation and wondered what he would do after he lost his student status:

> Companies want only new graduates. You only have one chance [for employment]. If you fail to get a full-time job offer when you are fresh out of college, a one year or two years blank period makes no difference. If I was going to become a *shūshoku-rōnin*, I would rather take the opportunity to do things that those who successfully got into employment wouldn't be able to do. I am already out of the mainstream path.

Jun felt that if he had not had the opportunity to find employment, it would have been better to gain various experiences that those who had had a conventional start in a workplace would not have had. Taking up a working holiday scheme seemed to have a striking advantage because he could enhance his English, which he had not made his priority while in university. Though his lack of success in finding a full-time position served to divert his life course to a 'non-mainstream' path, he took the opportunity of the working holiday scheme positively. Jun further said on another occasion:

> Judging by Japan's social standards, I doubt that a working holiday will be of use for the advancement of my career. Perhaps this working holiday doesn't have any social value, but for my part it has [a lot of benefits] and means a lot to me. There may be a gap between what Japanese society expects of me [regarding expected roles for graduates to contribute to society] and my way of living. But I want to fill the gap somehow in my own way.

Instead of spending another year job hunting in Japan, he had opted to go abroad. He had not been hesitant about having an extended period for this before entering into employment. After graduating from university, Jun had become a *freeter* and worked in a few part-time jobs to save the necessary money to live abroad. As he found himself having to develop his communication skills, he got a job in a chain restaurant first. When he found the job becoming easier, he changed jobs to the one in the Imperial

Hotel for six months as a *haken* worker wherein he learnt about punctuality and precision as key to the work process. "I've never told this to anyone in Dublin yet." He told me how his incentive to grab any opportunity that exposed him to new experiences had got him to the point where he worked in a *kyabakura*[7] for a few months. Far from his reserved demeanour, he showed an extensive degree of motivation for self-advancement, which eventually had led him to Dublin in October 2010.

As with some other participants and Tomohiro, Jun first applied for a U.K. working holiday visa. However, for the same reason as Tomohiro, Jun had chosen Ireland as an alternative destination. Jun's new life in Dublin, at least at the point of the first interview in April 2011, did not appear to have been smooth sailing. He was one of many young Japanese who had stopped going to a language school at some point for financial reasons and had stayed alienated from local life. There were two objectives for his stay in Dublin; one was to gain work experience; the other was to join in an Irish music session with his bodhrán (drum). Indeed, his love for music led to the vague dream of having his own music-related shop in the distant future. However, neither of his objectives showed any sign yet of being realised. Except for the times that Jun showed up at the meetup and language exchange events to meet his Japanese and foreign friends, which became central to his routine, he mostly found himself alone in his flat and relied exclusively on an English-Japanese dictionary as his study text. "I have brought this with me today to show you." Jun abruptly pulled out the thick dictionary from his bag and showed it to me with some embarrassment. He went on to

[7] *Kyabakura* is a Japanese neologism created from the French word 'cabaret' and the English word 'club.' This is one type of night-time entertainment service that appeared in the early 1980s, in which a number of professional girls entertain men with drinks, conversations or karaoke without involving sexual services (Kamise 2010).

explain that he had been aiming to learn English expressions starting from A on his own, copying what he found useful to his notebook. At the time he had just reached the letter T section after two months. Despite his intense passion for studying English, Jun self-studied it in a manner that seemed less efficient and productive. He added:

> I'm well aware that this learning style is very inefficient. I know that it's better to get a job and learn English through working. But as I'm a perfectionist, I don't feel like starting a job search until I complete this fun study method. I need to have strong communication skills for whatever I will do anyway. I don't want to just make simple conversation [with a low level of English proficiency].

His lack of confidence in English reflected his reluctance to extend his life beyond the two aforementioned social occasions. Due in part to limited access to information resources on how to get involved with the local Irish society, Jun remained hesitant about taking action to achieve his objectives. In response to my question if he had ever felt lonely in his somewhat solitary lifestyle, he said: "Not at all. I must build a foundation [of English] first." About half way through his life in Dublin, he had been struggling with how to articulate his thoughts in English. "Next year," Jun spoke in front of an empty plate, "I want to try the U.K. working holiday visa again. But before that, I wanna do what I can here." His words implied that he would try his best to achieve his objectives before his visa expired in six months' time.

Hiro: an escape from work

Hiro at age 26, a working holiday maker, was from Kyoto. He was one example of the few who felt released from intense work pressures and enjoyed the sense of temporary

‘freedom’ that he eventually attained by leaving Japan. His three years at a first-rate company, from the age of 23, were long enough to make him utterly exhausted, physically and mentally. “Every day I worked from 8 a.m. to the small hours (2 a.m.) of the morning, for 18 hours a day,” Hiro recalled the days of work and added that he had lived on one portion of udon noodles a day. It was not unusual that he would be called to the office on the weekends if there was any problem occurring on the assembly line. For three years, Hiro commuted back and forth to the office, feeling more lifeless every day. Despite the demanding work with long hours, he was not allowed to claim overtime pay. When I asked him how he survived such an intense work life, he again smiled and replied: “No, I couldn’t. Look at my hair.” He ran a hand through his hair to show me his grey-speckled hair which symbolised how a 26-year-old man had gone through incredibly intense working conditions. Without time even to sit down to dinner, he exerted himself to such an extent that his cheeks sank and he lost a lot of weight. Because of this, Hiro became very reluctant to go home to save his grandmother from worrying about him if she had seen him so thin: “I was able to work under such severe working conditions because I was young. But I saw my boss working even harder than me. When I imagined how my life would be like when I reached 40 years of age, I then began to question my destiny.”

In these extreme circumstances he had witnessed some of his senior colleagues collapsing at the office; some had died due to overwork and all his colleagues stayed single unless they found their partner in-house. The decision to go abroad was the only way to avoid the same predicament. “I couldn’t even ask for paid leave, I couldn’t spend even a minute trying to find another job. If you didn’t like the conditions,

resignation was the only way out." Hiro stressed the pressing work environment. He desired to free himself temporarily from the workaholic environment and yearned for the experience of a new way of life for a little while.

Instead of immediately moving on to the next job, Hiro sought relief from work pressures in a foreign land. His first experience of overseas life went back to his childhood which he described as "the happiest childhood in the world." He was born to a wealthy family as the younger child of two. His father had worked in the same industry as Hiro, but more recently has served as a city council member in his hometown. Taking his family overseas, around Guam and Saipan for holidays, his father was an admirable figure in that he offered young Hiro "authentic experiences and things."

"This is the preparation time to find a blond lady to be my wife." He spoke forthrightly about his motivation for coming to Dublin. Although his working conditions acted as a trigger to direct him to leave the workplace and change the scenery of his life, he related to me that he had had aspirations to marry a white woman as well as having half-white children. He went on to explain that since his father had always provided him with unforgettable experiences since his childhood, he had a dream to marry a white girl and provide for his children an international environment as he had received from his father. "So this [finding a white partner] is a way to surpass [the achievements and impacts of] my father." He said it was only because he respected his father more than anyone. Likewise, he appeared to have a similar respect for his mother:

> Since I was a junior high-school student, I have been disciplined strictly by my mother…I've been told to get married by the age of 30, have child(ren) by 35 and succeed to our family by 40. In my hometown conventions remained strong. My family is not the head family but one of five prestigious families there. [As the only son in my family] I must protect and conform to it.

Although his sexual interest in white females was expressed in a manner that would allow him to gain the respect of his father, it was evident that Hiro built up his future plans based on a strong sense of duty to and pride in his family which he had developed throughout his life.

> This kind of [romance] thing is probably not gonna happen if you work hard for it (*ganbarisugirunomo damenanndesuyo*). As a result of going with the flow, a good result may come to you. I don't really count on it anyway. Even after going back to Japan, I may move to Tokyo or Osaka. I don't know my plan yet. I will have plenty of time left before reaching 40 anyway. I will think about when the time comes.

In answer to my question about how he found his life in a foreign land, Hiro immediately responded: "Life is full of joy! I'm having a blast. This is the kind of fun I had in my student days." He looked exhilarated at what the future looked like now. Because he had worked so hard in Japan, he decided not to seek any part-time job as other Japanese migrants did. He continued: "I was financially better off at the time, but I don't even want to go back to the same life." However, he seemed to clearly know where he belonged and planned to return to. He was now enthused about cooking at his place since cooking was one of the skills passed on to him by his mother. Also, for he was an enthusiastic football fan, he occasionally travelled to European countries to watch football games. Apart from his grey hair, there was no trace of his former haggard

appearance.

Work environments in Japan and Japanese young men

Although my eight male participants provided an array of reasons for leaving Japan, an analysis of my ethnographic data identifies two major tendencies relating to the way in which they spoke of their impetus. Recent graduates in their early twenties conceived this temporary displacement to a foreign country as a positive challenge that might well lead to a bright future, whereas for those having some years of working experience prior to their migration, travelling overseas was seen as one form of escape from the realities of life in Japan. Despite this distinctive difference underlined by life stage, male participants' entrances into a foreign realm, as opposed to that of women's, bear a discernible relationship to the social expectation that success lay in a lifetime career. As it has been argued elsewhere (Suzuki 2015), this tendency suggests that work dominates and shapes much of Japanese men's gender identity in the same way that marriage does women's.

There were several male participants who professed to be in a marginal position in Japanese society, where marginality was defined as deviating from standardised adult life linked to good career prospects, by choice or by circumstances. Typically, graduates arrive at a crossroads in life towards the end of their undergraduate programmes. Students, soon to graduate like Jun, embark on *shūshoku-katsudou* – "seeking career-track employment" (Mathews 2004: 121) – which normally commences in the spring of their third year. Within a limited period of time, they face an important

moment of their life career course that affects the rest of their working life.

As briefly discussed in Chapter Three, the idea of lifetime employment securing stable income and a wide range of social welfare has been applied only to limited male employees working for large corporations (Andressen and Kumagai 1996: 43). Although lifetime employment has been, as Mathews points out, merely the norm and served rather as "a Japanese cultural ideal" for many young Japanese workers (2004: 122; see also Plath 1983: 7), getting a full-time position upon the completion of their schooling is believed to be the first step to properly becoming a respectable member in mainstream society. This discourse was seen through the male participants' life stories. Exemplified by Jun's standpoint that his social position put him outside of the mainstream career path, there was the implication that Japanese men's status within society was essentially defined by employment status. The immense pressure with regard to the means of engaging in society as an adult man mirrors recent trends that graduates who fail to walk into a white collar job upon leaving university are prone to repeat the last year of their university programmes, so as to gain another chance for employment, or are directed to becoming a *freeter*.[8] In a similar vein, going abroad is taken as a social outlet. This turning point in life taking place at a young age serves to demarcate a broad boundary between the mainstream way of life and a marginal one.

Going abroad without any concrete objectives is commonly seen as engaging in not

[8] As mentioned in Chapter Three, it is very difficult to single out the cause of youths becoming a *freeter*. Genda (2005) primarily locates the backdrop of the increasing number of *freeter* in the scarcity of full-time job opportunities. At the same time, there are people who spontaneously choose to become *freeter* in pursuit of their individual lifestyles (Honda 2005).

studying but playing. Indeed, as the term 'working holiday' explicitly indicates, studying overseas '*ryūgaku*' (留学), was sometimes mockingly referred to as '*yūgaku*' (遊学, the term that has become increasingly associated with the notion of 'studying pleasure') by my participants themselves, implying that their primary pursuit was not to study but to 'play.' This prevalent notion sets working holiday makers and non-degree students apart from degree-students studying abroad as well as from those on the track of the expected mainstream path in Japan. Going abroad on a non-regular student status is widely recognised as an act that detours from the normative route to maturity. Whereas this stance was mostly absent among the women whom I interviewed, most of my male participants, as represented by Jun's narratives, acknowledged that the physical move to a foreign land was one form of escape from the standardised path anchored in work structures. Whether their decision-making was a voluntary choice or was the result of the failure to find employment (Genda 2005: 56), young Japanese men's incentive to move to Dublin stemmed from their yearning to cultivate a different lifestyle to those who had entered the world of adulthood following the normative career path. The reluctance to be in the mainstream was echoed in Tomohiro's story that he voluntarily opted not to enter a career-track job. Tomohiro was a 23-year-old working holiday maker who had graduated from Tokyo University, the educational institution that continues to produce the nation's elites. Whilst more than half of his peers were compelled to become *shūshoku-rōnin* (graduates walking into unemployment or continuing job hunting after their graduation) due to the prolonged recession, he voluntarily chose not to enter career-track employment. "I don't want to live as a salaryman restricted by company rules. I want to be in a place that draws out my ability and allows me to test it," explained Tomohiro. Having travelled the path toward a

salaryman lifestyle, he now saw becoming a salaryman as incompatible with his ambitions. Driven by his dream of becoming an English teacher in a private tutorial school, he had decided to become a working holiday maker and improve his English skills through the experience of living abroad. Despite his peers' scepticism about his becoming a working holiday maker, he planned on giving himself three years to stay with the working holiday scheme and took advantage of his young age and ability to do so. Therefore, despite having the advantage of a degree from a prestigious university, his decision to stay outside of the normative career path was the reflection of his desire to explore life overseas. As seen in his case, the degrees of freedom inherent in living overseas met male participants' need for an extensive period of freedom before entering into future roles of salaried workers and breadwinners.

Resistance to the salaryman masculine norm

As I have mentioned, in post-war Japan wherein a hegemonic masculinity was built upon the salaryman masculine model, the mobility of Japanese men is typically seen in a negative light. Today, the ubiquitous salaryman masculinity, the base of Japanese households and society, has been challenged by youths. As seen in Tomohiro's narrative, the salaryman masculinity encapsulated the negative characteristics of being bound by work and family. With the conventional images of adulthood seen as being laden with duties to the household and the companies they work for, the hegemonic salaryman masculinity image no longer inspires "awe and respect, but rather.. ridicule and caricature" (Dasgupta 2010: 199; see also Mathews 2004: 129-130). Seeing the salaryman lifestyle as static yet questionable (Newman 2008: 660), these participants

discussed how becoming a salaryman meant acquiring and fulfilling adult roles and responsibilities to society. In this regard, the notion of adulthood is interwoven with an idea of maturity that shows "a capacity to make decisions or take some greater degree of responsibility for their actions" (ibid.: 653). Hence, being seen as mature attests to one's ability to fulfil social roles in the family or company and inevitably involves sustaining these commitments, which involves endurance or perseverance (Kinsella 1995; Kondo 1990; Lebra 1976). Lebra notes that "one must train, improve, and polish oneself in order to develop a strong, mature character" which is conducive to developing the self (1976: 164). Mature selfhood is then attained through learning resignation.

The representations of the salaryman depict them as static adults who resigned themselves to adult roles. The lifestyle of the salaryman was therefore antithetical to young Japanese men in pursuit of self-interest as we saw with Jun and Tomohiro. Tomohiro's statement that he had not wanted to be constrained by a company partially represents how the salaryman adulthood has been perceived by contemporary Japanese youths. The negative portrayal of the salaryman masculinity resonated with younger male participants who saw such a middle-class life course as being incompatible with their personal goals. Their resistance to taking the mainstream path to maturity was also found with Shinji, age 21, the youngest participant of all. Shinji remarked: "My father totally disagreed with my desire to go to an art college." At the young age of 21, his life canvas still remained blank. Although his true love was art and he wished to study it in the U.K., his father, a graduate from Tokyo University, had undermined Shinji's ambition and had attempted to compel him to go into a regular Japanese four-year college as he had. In the end, Shinji was successful in getting permission from his father

to go abroad to improve his English ability first, provided that he would return home if he had not obtained admission to an art school within two years.

Shinji's construction of freedom had been translated into his hip-hop style attire. He had a tattoo on the chest, was a skinhead in a white cap and wore low baggy pants as visual signs of a world he had been drawn into. Despite the use of youth slang and his surprising appearance for Japanese, he remained polite to his seniors including me. Shinji made himself very clear about his passion and the dream that he wanted to achieve. Simultaneously, it was a reflection of his resistance to the constrained image of adulthood he saw in his father. "Wake up at the same time every day, doing the same tedious routine work every day, it doesn't look fun at all in my eyes. That's why I don't want to follow the same path as my father." Shinji's sceptical gaze at his father's stable yet seemingly tedious working life had become an act of resistance towards becoming a constrained white-collar worker. Most of my male participants' negotiations in defining their *ikigai* were mediated through the image of the salaryman model of adulthood. The salaryman white-collar career path was a major social criterion which young male participants resisted and escaped from, while coping with the uncertainties of life and striving to achieve their dreams. The tendency of transnational moves amongst Japanese men was therefore not simply the result of the economic fallout, but reflected the resistance of young Japanese men to the expected life of a salaryman. Instead of being concerned with how to make a living, they felt that they still had the time to explore various opportunities. These men yearned to carve out a unique life by accumulating international experiences. This tendency resonates with men in other societies. For instance, Indian middle-class men portrayed by Batnitzky *et al*. (2008) temporarily

migrate to London. For them, migration might result in downward mobility and their work experience in a hotel in London often works against their class-based masculine expectations. However, migration offers the opportunity to self-explore and attain maturity through becoming financially independent of their parents. Similarly, for my participants, their self-realisation did not necessarily accord with the social expectation that they work for a company and marry in order to start a family as was the case with earlier generations. In the face of diversified lifestyles, travelling overseas was in this sense exercised as a form of self-realisation. These younger male participants were keen on taking up challenges and were eager to self-invest through various social experiences abroad. For them, a foreign land nurtured their ambitions, leading to an unlimited outlook for the future.

Constrained adulthood

Whereas younger male participants looked into a desirable future through self-development along their life course, participants who had had work experience as salarymen were less active and interactive. Whilst the salaryman norm had dimmed in its significance for younger male participants, those with some years spent in the workplace as a salaryman were, as seen in their narratives, undoubtedly work-committed, often prioritising their work duties over private matters. Participants like Hiro had tried to adhere to the average salaryman model of adulthood, having become bearers of the salaryman middle-class values. Another male participant Nariaki, a 28-year-old working holiday maker, likewise spoke of his experience of work that had permitted him to take only four of his holidays in the eight years of his working life.

Hiro's reflection on his work style was in effect the epitome of a constrained adulthood, which younger male participants were resisting. Despite the fact that Japanese youths have become responsive to various lifestyles, the entrenched vision of Japanese mainstream lifestyles, i.e., securing stable white-collar jobs after graduating from good universities and being married by the mid-thirties at the latest, continued to play a hegemonic role in determining these participants' life courses.

Although very few explicitly verbalised the concept of 'an escape' as the ostensible rationale for travelling to Dublin, the reluctance to find a job resonated with other male participants. Masaki, a working holiday maker, was another example. He was 28 years old when "the biggest adventure in life" began. Having worked for *Daihatsu* as a *haken* for five years, Masaki's employment status became precarious when he began to see a huge restructuring in his company; more than half of the part-time workers were being laid off, one after another, and *haken* workers like him were likely to be the next target. Going abroad had never been an option in his life until he was on the verge of unemployment as he did not even have a passport. But for Masaki, taking up the working holiday scheme seemed beneficial in three senses; he appropriately circumvented the embarrassment of losing his job; and it reasonably postponed the severe reality of job hunting; in addition, he could gain the prestige that comes with the experience of living overseas. Faced with the imminent consequences of restructuring, he decided to leave his job before he was fired. He did not hide the fact that his decision to come to Dublin was an escape from the fear of facing being unemployed. He recalled:

> If I had felt secure about my job, I wouldn't have chosen to come over here. I had never imagined going abroad until then. I wanted to get away from the embarrassing situation I might have had. This [living in Dublin temporarily] is my long 'summer holiday' in life. But I will definitely go home after one year. Holidays must end someday.

Masaki's life in Dublin was a very relaxed one. Except for the two-hour long weekly English lessons that he attended at a local community college in the city centre, he spent most of his time alone in his flat watching Japanese dramas and *anime* on Youtube, thereby becoming a night owl. Feeling comfortable with the withdrawn lifestyle. Masaki's free space and time were more of a chance to do nothing than do something he liked to do.

Participants like Hiro and Masaki sought a temporary haven to rest their souls. For those men in their late twenties and early thirties who already had some years of work experience prior to their migration, coming to Dublin was an once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. The option of leaving their local life behind and embarking on a course of action to take up the opportunity to go abroad, emerged when they faced life crises, the 'cracks' of life, that acted as a catalyst for them to seek some form of temporary change in life (Benson and O'Reilly 2009; Hoey 2005). Their emphasis on an 'once-in-a-lifetime opportunity' in turn highlighted the lack of autonomy that they had experienced through their rigid devotion to their work. Their work-centred life relegated and confined them to the realm of an adult life in which they had felt deprived of their freedom. For Hiro and Masaki, the desire for freedom was also a reminiscence of their youth when they had been able to take control of their lives.

Gill (2003: 145) argues that masculine mobility works as "an escapist fantasy" for most Japanese men. Although Gill discusses masculine mobility, physicality as well as immediacy in the context of Japanese male day labourers' lives who earn a precarious living, he sheds light on an alternative masculinity that these Japanese men, alienated from their families and workplaces, embody. Such an alternative Japanese masculinity is antithetical to the "generally static and intellectual" model of masculinity "where the permanent is valued over the temporary, and brainwork over bodywork" (ibid.), and it sharply contrasts with the mainstream salaryman norm of manhood. In line with Gill's argument as well as the popular discourse that sees the mobility of Japanese men in a negative light, the male participants having lived a normative life discussed this interval of their working life with a certain degree of fear about and guilt over deviating from the standard path. Therefore, during the phase where they would normally be consolidating their career and the social responsibilities that were expected to increase with age, these men themselves problematised their mobility and the inconsistency of the course of their lives. As seen in Masaki's deviation from his working life, he had never doubted the social role of a salaryman before facing his own dilemmas, and began to fear the public gaze that might have labelled him as deviating from the normative salaryman life. The achievements or failures that were intricately intertwined with the Japanese mainstream career path were influential in shaping to some degree a sense of inferiority/superiority regarding men's status in society. As conformity to the salaryman ideal of masculinity was indispensable in constructing their life courses, their emphasis on the temporariness of their tentative escape to a foreign land, for instance as "an escape from reality" to quote Masaki, meant something of a temporary immersion into a fantasy realm. By being distanced from the realities of life in Japan, i.e., from the

responsibilities and obligations that adulthood brings with it, they embraced living in a liminal place.

Living in the liminal place, their construction of freedom was exercised in varying ways. Whilst the participants in their early to mid-twenties actively tried out various forms of investing in their distant future, Hiro and Masaki conversely had the freedom of not engaging in anything but self-centred pleasure. As Hiro suggested, they were financially well-off with the money that they had saved in Japan. They were therefore not put in a situation of desperately looking for a job in Dublin. For them, freedom meant an appreciation of the present as well as a disengagement from the future. In this temporal distance from both the past and future, their pursuit of a better lifestyle was realised by the spatial distance from the realities in their homeland.

Torn between one's desires and family obligations

Although most of the various modes of my participants' frustrations and adversities were seen to be related to the social pressures stemming from work, family relationships constituted an important part of their concerns about their life courses. Amongst my participants, male participants were concerned more about their obligations than women. Hiro's narrative demonstrated that he had been subsumed into the ideology of the *ie* wherein all duties of an eldest son were responsibilities that he was expected to fulfil at a certain stage of life. Some other participants also expressed conflicting sentiments toward their family obligations that had greatly affected their life courses, which became part of their rationale for leaving Japan. They felt torn between their obligations

towards their families and their desire to determine their lives themselves. For them, going abroad was part of the negotiation process between these two positions.

Patriarchy and filial piety remain important in shaping many aspects of the moral sphere of gendered identities. Regardless of the post-war new Civil Code, the ideology of the *ie* has continued to exercise a powerful influence over normative liability, particularly on males from rural areas. Hidaka (2011) argues that there are generational changes in the hegemonic ideals of masculinity constructed around the *ie* system and its associated religious and household practices in post-war Japanese families. Although the way in which Japanese men interact with the *ie* fluctuates over time, her study demonstrates that Japanese men who built a family in the post-economic bubble showed little concern for the continuation of the *ie*. This in small part is due to changes in the Japanese economy that have resulted in the difficulty of sustaining a family business underpinned by the *ie* system, but it is largely due to changes in lifestyle, i.e., Japanese men tend to prioritise becoming urban corporate workers over pursing the family wealth through *ie* succession (2011: 117). However, despite such changes in lifestyle, along with delayed marriage, economic instability and urbanisation, the *ie* ideology has continued to play a hegemonic role in creating a strong sense of responsibility in the successor to an *ie*. This is true of a few of my participants who dealt with their obligations to the *ie*, e.g. the succession of their family line.

Interestingly, whereas younger male participants rarely referred to a type of responsibility that they might have to their families, male participants who were in their late twenties and early thirties were prone to discuss family affairs as part of their future

prospects. As with Hiro, Satoshi, a 28-year-old degree student, expressed impatience about his student status. Since he was the only son in the family, he felt that the continuation of his patrilineal line was his responsibility. Considering the responsibilities and duties of continuing his *ie* by taking over the family business that was directly related to what he was studying, he felt that he could not take extra time to complete his studies.

Although the ideology of *ie* was an integral part of their life courses, marriage was not yet an immediate concern for them. At the time of interview, none of the male participants had a girlfriend. Whilst they were aware of the necessity of marrying in the near future, they were more concerned with how to enjoy their fleeting freedom abroad. Therefore, in the case of Hiro, a reluctance to remain in his homeland was, in this case, derived from a sense of aversion to the *ie* where he saw the responsibilities overweighing his personal intentions. The sense of constraint that he felt left him powerless and unable to take control of his life. His decision to leave Japan was thus based both on his resistance to the roles that he was expected to play. Though this unconcern over the *ie* is characteristic of urban families as Hidaka argues, the ideology of *ie* was embodied by a few participants to the extent that it created a degree of obligation towards their families. This process was less applicable to female participants. Except for Nodoka and another participant, there were no female participants who referred to their commitments to the *ie*. Japanese men appeared to feel slightly more burdened by their duties to the household than women.

Conclusion

As I have detailed, in most cases Dublin was not the desired destination of my participants' sojourning. However, with the ease of obtaining an Irish visa, many had travelled to Dublin in order to being an alternative life even if temporarily because they had embodied the view that a relocation overseas could be a drastic solution which would infuse a new passion and motivation into life; putting them on the path to finding an *ikigai*. The narratives I have included here show that the Japanese whom I interviewed attempted to seek self-fulfilment outside of their jobs, family relationships. Although degree-students had the concrete objective of acquiring cultural capital, many of those on a non-regular student status had not, to varying degrees, found their personal fulfilment in their jobs nor seen their families as a source of emotional security in varying degrees. What was more evident was that their move to Dublin was as a result of their resistance to pursing the middle-class ideal of a Japanese woman's and man's lifestyle. By placing themselves outside the web of relationships overseen by *seken*, travelling overseas was thus taken as a path leading to the search for self-realisation. In short, as O'Reilly and Benson (2009: 5) put it, "spatial mobility in itself enables some form of self-realization." This form of mobility amongst youths is not a trend peculiar to the Japanese. Conradson and Latham (2005), Limpangog (2013), Wilson *et al*. (2010) note that youths' sojourning experiences abroad are motivated by diverse interests. Whether it be to travel, work or explore new career opportunities, youth migration tends to be oriented towards self-realisation and the enhancement of cultural capital. In the case of my participants, the quest for self-development was tied to a yearning for freedom. As with other studies of lifestyle migration (Griffiths and Maile 2014; Korpela 2014) which claim that the desire for freedom is a requisite theme in the decision to

migrate, the idea of freedom was employed equally by my male and female participants in order to construct their own life purpose and vision. Though they had the potential to remain part of the collective framework of Japanese society, they exercised the ability to migrate as a way to live outside of mainstream expectations. They narrated their motivations for leaving Japan in a manner that suggested one kind of experimental experience that would add new values and roles to their lives. In this view, migration was taken as a pragmatic means in order to negotiate their desires and transform roles, and thus identities.

In a time when a transient domicile in a foreign country has increasingly become a part of one's life cycle, youth migration is discussed in terms of the transition to adulthood. This body of scholarship is documented by Ungruhe (2010). In his study of young male migrants from upper eastern rural communities in Ghana, Ungruhe notes that although the current migration of young males is related to the desire to gain recognition amongst peers and be independent from their family's expectations, migration has conventionally been seen as a 'rite of passage' into adulthood by making money to contribute to the household economy and prepare themselves for marriage. Migration in this regard is a symbolic practice of acquiring adult roles. Youths' negotiating pathways into adulthood is similarly detailed in a study of Northern Irish young people by Thomson and Taylor (2005). They discuss the transition into adulthood in relation to the notion of localism that represents "home, tradition and fixedness" and that of cosmopolitanism that represents "mobility, escape and transformation" (ibid.: 337). In this rendering, mobility from physical and conceptual home does not necessarily involve positive transformations in life such as developing career prospects. But rather, my participants'

objective of acquiring cultural capital was embedded within the desire to escape from the realities of life and start all over again. Contrasted with studies that argue that youth migration is regarded as a rite of passage into achieving maturity and adulthood (Conradson and Latham 2005; Ungruhe 2010; Wilson *et al*. 2010), in the case of my study migration was taken as a pragmatic means to negotiate the participants' desires and transform their identities by abandoning the social roles necessary to achieve Japanese personhood.

Their departure from the standard subsequently signified the need to break free from the status-quo and led to desiring new roles and identities. Although their concerns and frustrations were related to the roles played in the both *soto* (career) and *uchi* (family, marriage) spheres, much of female participants' constraints was linked to the roles associated with the commitment to the *uchi* sphere, that is, the pervasive expectation that they had to marry. In contrast, many of the male participants had been motivated to travel to Dublin by their problematic employment status in the *soto* sphere and by familial constraints. The significance of gender in terms of the decision to migrate is little addressed in the body of temporary migration (Matsui: 1995; Mizukami: 2007; Nagatomo 2015). In particular, Japanese men's migration experiences have been largely unexplored. For instance, in Andressen and Kumagai's (1996) study of Japanese students in Australia, the fact that the number of Japanese female students is 1.4 times bigger than that of male counterparts is not thoroughly analysed. An insight into the phenomenon of female dominance in Japanese migrant numbers is offered by Kato (2010). In 2007, 82 per cent of working holiday makers in Canada were women (Kato 2010: 55). Kato reasons that Japanese men are deeply embedded in the Japanese

patriarchal system and usually become empowered through the roles associated with *soto* with age, and thus they have no benefit from embarking on a journey abroad and becoming a foreign worker (ibid.: 59). She analyses Japanese women's migration as equating with an escapism from Japanese patriarchy. Japanese patriarchy is intertwined with, or rather upheld by women's monopoly of domesticity. Therefore, the process of migration by women can be related to the characteristics of the Japanese patriarchal tradition. This perspective could account for the gendered migration trajectories of Japanese.

Simultaneously, there were distinctive characteristics with regard to men's travelling pattern to Dublin. For younger male participants, a transitory freedom was used as a commonplace justification for their decision to leave Japan, not the least of which was the psychological freedom from the frameworks that were significantly tied into a hegemonic salaryman masculinity. Tomohiro and Shinji thought that going abroad was a refusal to align with the normative expectations of life lived as a salaryman. As ordinary Japanese youths faced with life decisions, they had been at a crossroads in life and opted to take the challenge to seek out their own life course; Tomohiro wished to become an English teacher, Shinji desired to become an artist and Jun was not clearly delineating his future but was vigorously trying out part-time jobs, learning English and being involved in the host society in some way or another. For these men, bleak career prospects probably awaited them unless they acquired enough vocational skills to enter employment. They were therefore eager to make the most of their experiences of a life abroad and acquire cultural capital.

In contrast, the narratives of those who had gone through a period of adult life as a salaryman highlighted the adversities and the social pressures heaped on them as responsible adult men. The criticism of traditional ideas about the *ie* was also offered by these participants. Their desire for freedom simmered beneath a great deal of social and familial pressures and turned into a yearning for a reward for their hard work in Japan. Hiro had exhausted himself at work, and Masaki had ditched his pride in being a salaryman; both refused to acknowledge the fear of what awaited them when they returned to reality and thus led a very relaxed life while in Dublin. The transnational space was taken as more of a time in which to engage in self-centred pleasure than of a place in which to enhance their cultural capital.

Their inward-oriented lives in Dublin contrasted with the lives of the Japanese women whom I interviewed. In general female participants actively challenged the status quo and sought a means to maximise job opportunities and the expansion of their social networks in the world of *soto*. Without having much economic constraints, they made themselves open to wider social and cultural opportunities.

The narratives shown in this chapter illustrate the intersection of migration and the desire to be freed from social roles associated with the middle-class ideal of a Japanese woman's and man's lifestyle. Thus, their pursuit of a better quality of life abroad was a reflection of their desire to shake off their former roles or acquire new ones. From this perspective, the migration to which my participants resorted is situated as a way of transforming their roles and identities. Then, what happened to their sense of identity if they continued to live in Dublin? In the next chapter I will explore the shifts in

identification that were observed after the Great East Japan Earthquake that occurred on the 11th of March, 2011.

Chapter Five: The 3.11 disaster, reconstructing and performing Japanese national and ethnic identity

Part I: The 3.11 disaster

On the morning of March 11th in 2011 I caught the breaking news that a magnitude 7.9 earthquake hit Japan.[1] The Japanese archipelago is known for standing on four tectonic plates out of a dozen in the Pacific, the constant mobility and energy of which cause more than 5,000 3.0 plus magnitude earthquakes a year (Japan Meteorology Agency). Emergency preparedness training and education at school about natural disasters like earthquakes or tsunami are the result of the nation's long-term engagement with disaster. Earthquakes are therefore an inevitability Japanese must live with. Nevertheless, the incredibly high magnitude shown left me with a sense of anxiety.

As soon as I saw the news of the earthquake, I accessed a few websites and a social networking service that I used to communicate with participants. Some participants had already frantically posted on Facebook about the disaster, desperately seeking any relevant information. The clock on the laptop screen read around nine in the morning – the local time in Japan was after six in the evening, which meant that more than three hours had already passed since the earthquake had occurred. All means of communication to Japan seemed to have been shut down by then, and even transportation in the Tokyo metropolitan area appeared to have been paralysed, creating more than a hundred thousand *kitaku-nanmin* (stranded commuters). No information

[1] The Japan Meteorological Agency corrected the magnitude of Tohoku Region Pacific Coast Earthquake to 9.0 two days later (Japan Meteorological Agency 2014).

seemed to be certain in the midst of chaos, but I soon learnt that the epicentre was off the east coast of Japan into which a subsequent tsunami had slammed.

Typically, scholarly work on disasters is primarily on post-disaster discourses, emphasising the impacts of disaster such as the folklore narratives of the Chernobyl accident (Fialkova 2001); the reformulation of psychological knowledge and its practice after the aforementioned Great Hanshi-Awaji Earthquake in 1995 (Breslau 2000); or the practices of remembering via acts of memorialisation or memorial objects, wherein the past and memories play out such processes in the present context (Simpson and de Alwis 2008: 6). The post-disaster phase described in such literature delineates the dynamic social responses to the temporal and spatial disjuncture brought by the disasters and help constitute new social realities are created. In the wake of the fourth biggest earthquake in history, the Great East Japan Earthquake, later known as '3.11,' involving the tsunami that swept away more than 15,000 people and left about 2,600 missing (National Police Agency n.d.), and also created the threat of nuclear disaster, affected every part of life for the Japanese. Indeed, the repercussions of 3.11 engendered a self-reflective mood in the nation: both within and beyond the country people appeared to be reconsidering what it meant to be a Japanese person, as well as debating nuclear power plant security. While Japanese national consciousness continued to be on the rise on a global scale, this feeling also affected the migrants' lives in Dublin; it provided the context for the reconfiguration of Japanese national and ethnic identity amongst the Japanese residents at an individual level, but more noteworthy was that there was an explicit indication of a temporary solidarity amongst Japanese people in Dublin. A sense of collective affinity for the people in the homeland was forged out of

shared sorrow, and was further reinforced through their volunteer practices in Dublin.

This chapter investigates the ways in which a Japanese national identity was constructed and Japanese ethnicity was collectively manifested in Dublin. Whilst the previous chapters depicted my participants' differing trajectories to Dublin, the 3.11 was a collective experience for all of them. The 3.11 earthquake was an important part of their migration experiences, which facilitated in building solidarity amongst Japanese migrants and resulted in a spontaneously-formed, temporary migrant-centred volunteer group called Aid Japan Dublin (AJD). Over two months, I volunteered, until it was disbanded in late May. Through tracing the formation process of AJD and people's responses to the disaster and their charity practices, it becomes clear that the participants began to make reference to a range of behaviour and characteristics associated with orderliness and morality. These cultural traits came to be consolidated as cultural axes around which nationality and ethnicity were shaped. These processes highlight that despite their desire to transform their identities through migration, the 3.11 rather served as a platform to reaffirm national and ethnic identity. Within the processes of developing a collective identity, otherwise faceless Japanese migrants became visible and active agents, and fulfilled the expected role of a Japanese person. The personal narratives of the people engaged in the group's activities and my participant observation will all demonstrate the processes of the participants' becoming a Japanese person in transnational spaces.

The formation of a student-oriented charity group

In response to the Japanese disaster that dominated news headlines in Ireland, various social groups and organisations in Dublin took prompt action to support Japan. Indeed, from March 11th to late April, in parallel with the launch of AJD, the news heightened local people's, both Japanese and non-Japanese, awareness about the need for financial support for the victims. A number of social groups and venues undertook their own aid actions. Within a short period of time, I encountered benefit gigs, collections by the Rotary Foundation, the Irish Red Cross and Japanese Embassy-led fundraising events, several charity events organised by the Japanese society of TCD, and a donation event held at St. Patrick's College run by a Japanese female student, as well as pub collections. One example was an event in late March run by a long-established Japanese restaurant. Earlier on, the restaurant had posted an advertisement on Facebook for an event that would end with donating the restaurant's takings for that day. Another occasion of spontaneous charity involvement took place in the biggest and oldest Asian market in Ireland that had been operating for 30 years. Howard, the Hong Kong owner, had voluntarily set up a cardboard box at the cashier before any AJD member approached him to ask for support of their activities. "To help the victims. Like [we are] all one human beings." Howard sheepishly showed me the handmade box, which was not overburdened with notes and coins, and asked me to which organisation he should donate. While the news continued to receive a great deal of public attention, a charity group initiated by a few working holiday makers came to play a central role in establishing widespread cooperation amongst the wide range of Japanese-related social groups – namely groups for individual language students and working holiday makers, Japanese societies at the local Ireland universities, the housewives' groups, organisations (the Japanese Embassy, the Irish Red Cross, Ireland Japan Association)

and food venues (Japanese restaurants and Asian supermarkets). It was the first time Ireland had seen such Japanese unity.

My initial access to the student group was on the night of the 14th of March. I ran into Tamaki, the 29-year-old female working holiday maker, in front of TCD while en route to Nariaki's birthday party which was taking place where the meetups were regularly held. As soon as Tamaki caught sight of me, without so much as a greeting, she grabbed my arm and told me: "There is a meeting going on in Trinity [college]. Let's go." The serious expression on her face convinced me that I had to double back to the TCD gate. When we entered the seminar room in the Arts Building of TCD, we were greeted by 13 young Japanese sitting around the table. Our entrance distracted their attention for a second. I made a slight bow to the attendants. Most were people whom I had got to know through the meetups and other casual social occasions – a few TCD students, language students and working holiday makers, mostly in their twenties, only four of whom were male. A TCD student was taking the role of chairperson to decide a venue where they could set up a donation box. Once someone had named one long-standing Japanese restaurant, other restaurant names followed. Not only were Japanese restaurants suggested, but also some other food venues in the city. The discussion then turned to who had contacts for these restaurants and who would volunteer to visit them to obtain their permission. Although only a very few people seemed to have local contacts, the listed venues were assigned to some active members. In the meantime, Tamaki and I were standing at the back of the room and leaning against the wall in silence, both playing the role of listener. There was constant tension in the room. I wondered where this meeting would lead these young people. Prior to this meeting, Aoi,

one of the participants, had visited the Embassy of Japan in Dublin with another friend in search of practical advice and an affiliation for the charity. However, her offer was declined and it was suggested that she contact the Irish Red Cross instead. Coincidentally, another group of working holiday makers approached the embassy for the same purpose at the same time. This would ultimately result in these separate groups, who were trying to gain the support of established organisations, becoming joining forces.

Aid Japan Dublin

This inchoate group was later named 'Aid Japan Dublin' (AJD). It was organised by some of the participants of the previously mentioned meeting and headed by Chika. Chika was a 24-year-old female working holiday maker. She was chosen as a representative of AJD because she was from the area stricken by the tsunami. "It's my first time to live this long outside of Japan," she started. Chika was a girl who loved music and art. Her desire to come to Dublin was in part to improve her English skills, but above all, she had aspired to leave her hometown, Iwaki in Fukushima where she had lived all her life until November 2010 and gain the experience of life abroad. The disaster that happened only three months after her arrival in Dublin, however, re-oriented her life towards the home that she had just left. Her first experience of living abroad soon turned out to be laden with the responsibilities of representing the group to the local media and organising a series of events for the AJD. In retrospect, Chika expressed her dilemma about remaining in Dublin at a time of crisis. A part of her hometown was reduced to rubble by the earthquake and tsunami. "I really wanted to go

back and be with the local people. I was feeling so sad." Chika wished to go home right after the disaster, but it did not seem feasible due to the damage inflicted on the infrastructure. She remarked in a saddened tone: "I felt conflicted as to whether I should go back or not. But my friends in Japan encouraged me to stay on in Ireland, because my time in Ireland is also limited [due to her one-year visa]. Now I think I should stay here for one year as first planned." Chika's initiative to organise a charity group started with a rather personal motivation. "At that time, I couldn't help doing something, anything to cheer up my friends over in Miyagi and Fukushima, that's all," Chika continued. She went on to tell me that AJD activities were in part for herself, as they helped mitigate her sense of unease. For her, charity actions were a pragmatic way to cope with the reality occurring at home and sustain emotional ties with her loved ones in a predicament.

The objective of this group was primarily to raise funds to support the disaster-stricken areas by means of various kinds of fundraising events. Its activity was centred around an online social networking tool, Facebook, where all the activity reports, announcements and advertisements for volunteer recruitment were constantly being posted. AJD's first move was to establish a stable volunteer group with local associations for facilitating their activities. Yet, the temporary nature of the volunteers' stay was to become an obstacle. The lack of roots in the local community made it an urgent task to find people who had local contacts with other established groups. Given this situation, those living in Dublin on a long-term basis such as students studying in the local university and business people became the bridge between the group and the local organisations. A newly opened Japanese restaurant called Mitsuba on Parnell

Street also came into the picture. The group's affiliation with this restaurant was made possible with the help of those living for a long period. Mitsuba proposed to sponsor AJD by providing them with a meeting space downstairs and free AJD group T-shirts with the restaurant's name on it. They also set a soon-to-be commonplace donation box on the counter. Although their partnership with AJD integrated with their promotional activities targeted at the Japanese population living around Dublin, the alliance and support of a newly formed volunteer group was welcomed. Moreover, the social group Shamrock's Meeting formed by Japanese wives married to local Irishmen offered assistance to AJD. As most members of the group were involved in child-minding, they contributed to AJD's activities within various time constraints through participating in several street collections and supplying paper cranes that they had folded at home, which were handed out in reciprocation for a donation. The Irish shop owner, who was married to the Japanese woman, selling Japanese ornaments and kimono in the St. Stephen's Green Shopping Centre, also responded to AJD's call for support and arranged to hold a money collection in the shopping centre right after the news report of the 3.11. In this way, AJD won support from various social groups. As its grassroots activity rippled across various dispersed social groups, it gradually became normal, for example, to encounter a donation box with an AJD logo in a Japanese restaurant after the disaster.

The volunteers

Whilst only a handful of the volunteers had a direct relationship to the disaster, a good 20-30 individuals, whether temporary or not, volunteered. Also, non-Japanese residents

such as the local Irish, other Europeans, Canadian, Middle-Easterners and Asian students who were related to the Japanese volunteers through meetup or schools, became responsive to the devastating situation in Japan and routinely participated in subsequent activities. The disaster that struck Japan that day was just one event in a massive volume of news broadcasted to the world that was easily buried under a deluge of everyday information. Yet, for most of the Japanese with whom I spoke in Dublin, a high degree of sympathetic resonance with Japanese in their homeland acted to rationalise their involvement in the charity actions. Including Chika, no Japanese abroad had directly experienced that particular disaster themselves, but rather had a sort of proxy experience, informed by both private and public narratives. For some Japanese like Hiro who had firsthand experience of the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake in 1995, the 3.11 Earthquake also evoked the memory of his own experience with the earthquake. Hiro stated:

> I was in the fifth grade when I experienced The Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake. I was in my bed when the quake was felt. I was half asleep and had thought that I had been just dreaming, but quickly realised that it was not a dream when I saw Lego bricks resting on the shelf falling. I hid under the blanket on the bed until the quake ceased. There were no words to describe the terror that I felt...The news of this earthquake [3.11] made me flash back to its experience….Actually, I thought about going home [after hearing the news of the earthquake]. But it would be disrespectful to people in Japan [*shitsurei da*] if I went home, stayed there, had a shower, drank water and had a meal [because a stable supply of these have not yet been secured in some regions].

Wearing a serious expression, he emphasised his growing awareness of a national consciousness. The English term ‘home’ involves multiple meanings in the Japanese

language such as *jitaku*/*uchi* (residence) and *hurusato*/*kokyou* (native country) (Kenkyūsha 1980). In his interviews, he often used the Japanese word '*sokoku*' in describing Japan – the term defined as 'one's homeland' as well as 'the land of one's ancestors' (Kenkyūsha 1954). He explained this:

> '*So*' of the word '*sokoku*' also indicates ancestors, and without them, I wouldn't be who I am today. So I consider *sokoku* as the essence of my being…It behoves me to support my *sokoku* as a Japanese citizen. To be honest, for us as the bearers of the nation's future, that we didn't experience this disaster is a guilt. I, as a member of my country, feel guilty about living away from my country in a time of crisis. I feel that I am living a life of ease here in Ireland should be questioned.

Suggesting that he struggled with his inability to share the adversities with his family, friends and the people with whom he had worked while in Japan, Hiro remarked that his sense of guilt was directed towards "the nation as a whole." The dilemma raised by being away from his homeland regulated his behaviour to the extent that it made him withdraw from a planned trip to Italy to watch football. Critical of pursuing his self-interests, Hiro indeed participated in most of the AJD activities while significantly developing an awareness of belonging to Japanese society.

Coinciding with Hiro's view, Megumi also took part in AJD's actions by using the personal networks that she had established over seven years. Megumi, a work permit holder, expressed her sense of allegiance to her homeland as follows:

> If I hadn't taken any action to support Japan, I would have felt guilty. Because I am Japanese, so it's not correct that I don't contribute to my country when it has an emergency situation. I've looked after the disabled people here in Ireland for seven

years. They are not my people [but I have done it], so I should be able to offer help for my own people.

For Megumi who had felt little need to socialise with other temporary migrants, AJD became a medium through which to become closely associated with other young Japanese for the first time in seven years. Likewise, Yoshi, the 40-year-old musician married to the Spanish woman, was one of those who had stayed aloof from other Japanese residents in Dublin. He recalled the time when the 2004 Indian Ocean Earthquake and Tsunami had evoked a series of charity gigs that he had joined. He remarked: "Back then we had more than 20 benefit concerts. But this time there weren't any at all [before AJD organised it]. I guess people think the Japanese have money. That's why." Whilst referring to young temporary migrants as 'aimless people' and showing indifference to networking with Japanese residents, he somehow became part of the solidarity for a greater purpose to contributing to his native country. This sort of story went on and on. Contrary to the impressions that his hip-hop style fashion might give people, Shinji always maintained a polite attitude to others. This 21-year-old student was hesitant about joining AJD. However, after saying that "I can't do this [money collection], I feel embarrassed," he eventually came back from a tattoo shop to the street collection spot on Dame Street to join the activity as promised. As seen from these examples, the shared sense of grief and terror that grew out of the simulated or real experiences of the disaster also resonated with numerous migrants in Dublin. Sorrow extending beyond national borders explicitly influenced the way that the migrants saw themselves as responsible Japanese persons, which subsequently regulated their decisions about how they would engage in collective actions. Despite Chika's statement that she did not have many Japanese acquaintances in Dublin before the

disaster, the AJD group that rose out of the concern about her hometown and friends in Japan brought individual migrants altogether under the banner of charity.

Repercussions of the 3.11: media and Japanese ideals

The narratives of the 3.11 were of great significance in shaping Japanese nationalistic sentiments and uniting the scope of ideas about Japaneseness. Live footage of the tsunami washing out coastal towns in northeast Japan arguably provided a platform of emotional resonance among Japanese people across the globe. In the midst of mounting concern about the accident of Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Plant that resulted in releasing radioactive toxins into the environment[2] and the extent of the damage caused by the earthquake and subsequent tsunami, the call for prayers for Japan was quickly spread on such social media as Twitter, Facebook or blogs. These social media platforms began to be dominated by the phrase 'Pray for Japan,'[3] while simultaneously transmitting a wide range of information concerning practical support to those affected, countermeasures against aftershocks and precautions against radiation exposure. Though the degree to which people engaged in these media varied, a sense of intimacy was shared and mediated through social media (Hjorth and Kim 2011). In parallel with the exchange of such information at the grassroots level, the crisis rallied enormous relief supplies and humanitarian support from all over the world, which asserted Japan's membership in the

[2] In the wake of the earthquake and tsunami, the accident of Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant resulted in a critical amount of radioactive contamination into the air and ocean (Morino *et al*. 2011).

[3] In the wake of the earthquake and tsunami that occurred in March 11th, prayers and words of encouragement tagged with 'Pray For Japan' quickly spread on social media (prayforjapan.jp 2011).

international community.

Although the period of post disaster instability was also characterised by the public outcry over the government's response to the nuclear accident, what I want to shed light on is that as the media coverage of the disaster gradually shifted its focus from real footage to the global response to the 3.11, the mass media discussions of the earthquake and tsunami experiences were prone to feature popular perceptions of Japanese. The media portrayal of Japanese became increasingly linked to the popular representations of the Japanese as stoic, selfless, civil and orderly (Heaven 2011; Kristof 2011). Notions of harmonious interpersonal relationships and the spirit of mutual help became a recurring theme, reported in much of the social media (Sugimoto 2011; Tonohira n.d.). In turn, the Japanese media responded to the Western media narrating those particular aspects of reality; for instance, Jiji Press (2011) introduced the American media's response to how people in the stricken areas were patience and kept order without looting, to their domestic readers.[4] Such views of Japanese society and people configured in Western mass media were considered tangible evidence that would convince others of Japan's cultural supremacy within and outside Japan. My participants were no exception in this regard. Hiro stated:

> The Japanese are thoughtful of others even when they are in distress. That's the Japanese culture. I thought that our country was at stake. But learning about the cohesiveness of Japanese helping on the soup runs from the news and Twitter, I now feel so proud of my country. When living as a salaryman in Japan, I didn't see

[4] Jiji Press (March 16th 2011) reported how the American media featured the absence of looting, as well as stoicism and social orderliness of the Japanese people affected by the disaster. Drawing on Hurricane Katrina in 2005 and the Haiti Earthquake in 2010, CNN attempted to analyse the reasons for the underlying difference in 3.11 and the audiences responded with the idea that the Japanese culture was based on respect and dignity and that such behaviour was Japan's national pride.

> the meaning in life. But now especially after such a disaster, I found so many good things about my country. Mutual help is the spirit of Japanese culture and I want to stay with that spirit, which is why I participated in the activities of AJD – to give my full support to my homeland.

Describing Japan as a respectful country (*chantoshita kuni*) in terms of people's mind-set and conduct, Hiro's patriotic sentiment was built partially upon the external representation of Japan. Just as other temporary migrants whom I met in the field, Jun participated in several events of AJD.

> I joined some of the AJD's activities to do anything I could do to help Japan…The Japanese living here seem to go with individualism that in fact doesn't suit my nature. But they are Japanese after all so that they act as Japanese when collective actions are needed like this time. I totally concur with Nariaki [one of the AJD organisers] that it is very Japanese that everyone gave a hand to operate AJD and worked patiently.

As was the case in Jun, 3.11 served to reinforce emotional ties with Japan for Ayaka. She remarked:

> I am Japanese and am proud of having Japanese roots. This feeling got stronger in the wake of the disaster. I couldn't really think of the positive aspects of Japan before coming to Dublin. But the earthquake changed my view of my country. It is devastating to see plumes of smoke rising over the stricken areas on the news. But I am also impressed by the way affected people in the stricken areas behaved; they looked very apologetic when rescued. I learnt from this news the praiseworthy aspect of Japanese who always make an effort to keep harmony (*wa wo taisetsu ni suru*) and being humble, diligent. This is the very reason why Japan has become the pre-eminent nation in Asia and worldwide.

Ayaka went on to tell me that the 3.11 facilitated a positive image of the Irish through seeing their emotional support and donation to AJD, and that she had had increased communication with her mother in Japan, to whom she had described the local response to Japan's plight and AJD activities she occasionally engaged in. The frequent communication with her family and friends was instrumental in enhancing her sense of belonging to Japan.

As represented by these narratives, laudatory words about Japanese people's behaviour were commonly cited by the participants. In light of the fact that my participants experienced the 3.11 through media coverage, the media played a significant role in inculcating a certain mode of Japaneseness in the participants' consciousness. The mass media wields immense influence over the migration experience. Various scholars have discussed the significance of the role of the mass media in constructing an imagined community (Anderson 1991; Appadurai 1996; Marvin and Ingle 1999), and the social media also plays a significant part in creating a particular sphere wherein memories, narratives and images are shared in order to constitute a sense of co-presence. Appadurai (1996: 35) terms such images as 'mediascapes' constructed upon "media-centered, narrative-based accounts of strips of reality," which transcend national space and shape diasporic public spheres. Even though the rise of cultural essentialism and nationalism at times of social formation is a common response (Breslau 2000: 191), the 3.11 crisis was an instance that demonstrated the interplay between the mass media as a tool for disseminating selective reality and the affirmation of a national identity among the Japanese migrants. With various media circulating particular aspects of the narratives of the disaster, it was during the period of social unrest that those aspects of

Japanese nationalism spoke of "harmony, beauty, and the spirit of traditional Japaneseness" (Chakrabarty 1998: 294). Though it is typical of the Japanese overseas that their homeland often ends by being idealised and remembered "as a society of people who care about one another" (Befu 2003: 15), such descriptions emerged out of media depictions of the affected people preserving the public order and rational, moral conduct and they began to enter the participants' everyday vocabulary as a way to describe the peculiarities of the Japanese. The conversations with my participants became increasingly filled with the words orderliness, calmness and harmonious cooperation, all of which were used to represent an idealised Japanese society. What was evident was that the migrants' conceptualisation of Japanese characteristics was built upon on reconfigurations of Japaneseness by Others. As scholars claim (Brealau 2000; Fialkova 2001), narratives of disaster typically involve not only local but also global-scale responses. The set of norms trumpeted as virtues through various mass media were not entirely the product of their own Japanese narratives, but particular images of Japaneseness involving a mutual conceptualisation of Japan.

As I have noted in Chapter Three, post-war Japan saw the flourishing of the discourse of Japaneseness constructed on the back of the West's politico-cultural hegemony. Groupism and the Japanese lack of individuality were theorised by Western intellectuals as accounting for Japan's conduct in WWII and gained currency in the post-war period. This Western image of Japan was articulated in a growing body of literature and indeed manifested itself in a paradigm of power between the West and Japan (Revell 1997; Said 1979). The *nihonjinron* discourse transformed from "an expression of Japanese demoralisation, defeat, and military and economic subordination to America" (Revell

1997: 70) to the nation's "new strength" against the backdrop of growing economic power (ibid.: 72). The paramount importance of collective efficacy in Japanese society has become firmly entrenched in the popular discourse of Japaneseness as something the Japanese can be proud of, thereby inverting the power dynamic with the West. This ideological construction of national discourse articulated within the Asia-West power relations parallels the case of Singapore. Ang and Stratton (1995) argue that the difficulty of asserting an ethnically-syncretic and already-Westernised Singaporean national identity is rightfully resolved by constructing authentic Asianness that stands in contradistinction to inauthentic Westernness. In this context, the West is situated as a defining Otherness of a Singaporean national identity, and the roots of Asian ethnic groups and their cultural values including Confucian-based ideas of groupism (see also Ortmann 2009). In a similar vein, narratives about the nation involved relational processes of social positioning. A favourable view of Japan arose amongst Japanese migrants in association with these media portrayals of Japan. The popular belief in Japanese ideals became the grounding for a Japanese collective identity through not only the communication of their own collective activities taking place in the foreign place but also through the external representations of the Japanese. The discourse about 'how Japanese should be' became prominent and was reproduced in an attempt to fix the ideals for the roles that one plays as a Japanese living across national borders. Although the solidarity amongst Japanese residents was very short-lived, such Japanese ideals were favourably embodied amongst the people with whom I worked in the field.

Indeed, AJD played an important role in providing a space of belonging and roles to fulfil for all the people involved. For some young Japanese who were at a loose end,

charity activities engendered a drive to change their mundane lives in Dublin. Tracing the various trajectories of individuals' motivations for associating with AJD reveals the multiple levels of the volunteers' commitment to the charity group. Inspired by Chika's initiative to support the disaster's victims, central to their active participation in volunteering was their allegiance to their compatriots both in Dublin and Japan. Volunteering became central to some of the participants' lives while AJD was in operation. AJD expanded its range of activities over two months from simple money collecting on the street and at local shopping centres to more diverse cultural events such as two large benefit gigs in collaboration with notable Irish bands, several Japanese culture-related workshops at local art centres, and promotions on local radio and in local newspapers, which eventually mobilised funds amounting to 56049.63 Euros. Rigid commitment to charity activities at the cost of their private lives that involved school and part/full-time jobs amongst the volunteers, particularly the group organisers, was evidently intense. "You look so tired today. Are you OK?," I asked Aoi when I saw her weary look. Waiting for the bus to the shopping centre where the second money collection event was to be held in late March. Aoi smiled wanly and responded: "I'm OK, but time is ticking away. We've got to do this while people still remember the disaster." It was not only Aoi but another seven to eight organisers who devoted most of their private time to the AJD meetings on successive days. While having great difficulty managing her part-time job as a systems engineer, Aoi made AJD acts of paramount importance.

At the initial stages of fundraising activities, the narratives of post-disaster prompted the migrants to contribute to the nation via performing deeds with a growing patriotic

sentiment. This sense of responsibility and interpersonal relationship forged through the collective act, however, gradually faded with time. Whilst the discourse of Japanese ideals continued to exercise its influence over the societal roles of a Japanese person, the patriotic response to the 3.11 disaster gradually turned into a pressure to keep going and led to complaints about the prolonged activity of AJD. Laments such as "I can't keep up with them [AJD]" or "They [AJD] are bothering others by asking the Irish for donations for over two months" became louder as all weekends were fully scheduled with AJD-related activities. Many of the participants, whether explicitly or implicitly, began to be critical of the commitment expected of volunteers as AJD's prolonged activities began to conflict with their interests. Not a small number of volunteers, even some organisers themselves, said that they were feeling tired of sacrificing their private time, telling me that they felt that AJD actions had become untenable. Considering their sense of comradeship within this peer group, however, these people asked to remain off the record.

Whilst the ideas of stoicism and orderliness interwoven into a national consciousness continued to regulate the behaviour of my participants, such ideals became increasingly associated with the social responsibility of working for AJD. Endurance and effort we have seen as, as I have noted in Chapter Three, essential qualities of maturity. These ideals required them to be committed to AJD activities, which the majority of the participants began to feel burdened at maintaining. Whilst still willing to support their homeland via AJD, most of the participants felt pressured to keep performing the expected role of a Japanese person, engendering a similar type of constraint that they had felt while in Japan. As a result, they became dissociated from AJD affairs in varying

degrees, with the conviction that a sense of loyalty to the nation and Japanese people inside and outside of Japan should not define or hinder their individual choice of roles that they played in Dublin. In fact, AJD activities did not involve any type of responsibility other than the volunteers' sense of moral obligation. AJD activities relied solely upon volunteers' personal commitment. Charity, as Miyanaga (2004: 19) notes, is considered to be a non-binding social expression of goodwill, wherein compassion amongst the members of a particular group reinforced a sense of belonging to the group. In the case of my participants, the sense of camaraderie and responsibility was directed towards both the imagined collective of Japanese and the AJD. Given a sense of connectivity to home encapsulated within patriotic sentiment, their allegiance to the nation glamorised their commitment; it grew out of a combination of shared emotion with the people at home and of a fragile sense of camaraderie amongst the volunteers. This sentiment of belonging to two groups – people back home and their friends in Dublin – legitimised their commitment to the AJD, through which the need for maintaining group cohesiveness was created.

A communal recognition of a collective Japanese identity the 3.11 helped bring about became entangled with the creation of an ideal homeland. To take part in AJD activities was often discussed as part of their duty as Japanese citizens. As discussed, the idea of modern nations is underpinned by rights and obligations among members of a community (Poole 2005: 272; Smith 1991: 9). The narratives of the nation in this case are further extended to the moral sphere of collective responsibility, intimately intertwined with the expected role of a 'Japanese person.' Although AJD was bound by emotional ties, the group created roles that had to be filled. Amid waning solidarity, the

dichotomised idea of selfless-self and private-self became the prevalent language in the lives of volunteers. As discussed in Nakano's study (2000) on 'volunteer identity' that provides an introduction to the subject of civic activity – volunteering in post-war Japan – this socially respectable activity is thought to provide a possible common ground on which to develop a sense of collectivity within a particular social group. Nakano argues that since the 1990s volunteering has come to represent an alternative value in life; a form of non-material achievement for self-realisation that one can attain by positioning oneself outside the workplace or the home and linking oneself to a broader collective consciousness. Following both the Hanshin-Awaji earthquake in 1995 and a 1997 oil spill from a sinking Russian tanker off the Japan Sea coast, "a type of citizen-oriented and public-spirited" form of community and its civic value have been praised in the media and government (2000: 94). As opposed to what she calls 'mainstream identities' which are significantly tied into the middle-class ideals of womanhood as being a housewife and mother and of manhood as being the primary earner in the households, Nakano argues that volunteering is an alternative means of gaining respect, status, meaning and finding a space of belonging in society. However, the ways in which her respondents navigate through the mainstream values and ideals, and perform their volunteer identity depend on what they prioritise during the course of their life. Of course, shifting emphasis on particular roles that one plays – what Nakano calls 'life-strategy decisions' – is a common practice (ibid.: 95). However, in my fieldwork there was a strong indication that the volunteers found themselves confronted by the clear-cut dichotomy between selfless contribution to the community and the selfish pursuit of their own self-interest and knew that to commit to AJD, and by extension Japan, would be a powerful testimony to their belonging to Japanese society. Though

they began to think critically of such an assumption, the Japanese themselves configured selflessness and a group unity as being indicative of an inner Japanese spirit and being engaged with Japanese ideals.

Part II: National symbols and ethnic costume

As I mentioned in the Introduction, given the fact that the number of Japanese residents in Ireland amounts to only over 1,700, the presence of the Japanese in Dublin has not had a significant impact on the host society. Within this social framework, symbolic objects such as the national flag and Japanese dress marked Japanese ethnicity. The relations between objects and subjects are considered in the work of Yatabe (2003) writing on the Japanese residing in France. Yatabe analyses the gap between the representation of Japan and identity-making, and argues that a relatively small number of Japanese migrants (about 20-30,000 in France) is "an *objective invisibility*," (2003: 31, emphasis in original) therefore it is "the visibility of the objects" that are attached to Japanese ethnicity which represents the Japanese (ibid.: 35). In light of the cultural and political unfamiliarity with Japan in the Irish context, visible objects serve as signifiers that represent the anonymous Japanese. This logic is strategically reflected in the migrants' self-presentations of Japanese ethnicity towards external audiences. The focus on the ethnic heritage and the aesthetically appealing aspects of Japan was made in an attempt to mark the Japanese presence. In this discursive framework, objects are a means through which to speak of Japan and its people. This section investigates the ways in which migrants used symbolic objects in their fundraising.

A collection on the St. Patrick's Day

The usual Wednesday's meetup nights turned into a platform for soliciting volunteering from attendees and sharing information about upcoming fundraising events. Around 8:30 p.m. on the 16th of March, Aoi walked towards the centre of the space in the pub, seeking an opportunity to draw attention to what she was going to announce. Instantly Richard, standing next to Aoi, raised his voice over the din of the crowd to draw the meetup attendees' attention, the crowd who were holding pint-glasses in their hands fell silent. In the presence of approximately 50 Japanese and non-Japanese, she explained the significance of the following day's event scheduled to take place on the St. Patrick's Day as well as how this charity group would address the catastrophic situation in the Tōhoku area. She politely encouraged voluntary participation in the event. This AJD official announcement was followed by Richard's English translation delivered to those who had less proficiency in Japanese. The crowd at the scene keenly listened to both representatives' talks.

The event called 'Face Painting and Collecting Messages For Japan' aimed at raising public awareness of the disaster that had occurred in Japan as well as appealing for financial aid. Ireland's biggest celebration is held on March 17th across the entire island, and in 2011 fell six days after the 3.11 disaster, thus it was fortunately timed to suit this purpose. AJD's initial plan to hold a street collection in the city centre where annually 550,000 spectators from all over the world gathered was not feasible because permission for fundraising was not granted by the Gardai in time. Alternatively, AJD saw this festival as an opportunity to appeal to the general public without asking for any

form of financial support but simply to collect supporting messages for the people affected. Triggering public attention was considered the most urgent priority while the disaster was still fresh in people's memories. Information about the event that accompanied the face painting was made available on the AJD's web page on Facebook.

Upon arriving at St. Stephen's Green gate right before 9 a.m. the next day, I found dozens of people, predominantly young Japanese but with some non-Japanese regular meetup members, occupying the main entrance of the park. Most of the faces were familiar, and some new faces were friends of the Japanese volunteers. They were all in fancy dress; some wore green items visible under their clothing, and four Japanese girls looked colourful in a Japanese outfit called a yukata in the cold weather. Yukata is a type of kimono – the literal meaning of which is 'thing to wear' – which is typically worn in casual social settings. At a corner of the gate, the core members of the AJD were having a meeting in a circle. The time was 9:35 a.m. already but there was still no sign of any action happening soon. In the meantime, I counted the number of attendants, ambling among the 42 volunteers and exchanging greetings. I noticed Kayo, a core member of AJD, approaching each attendee and asking if she could face paint them. Holding a brush in one hand and a colour palette in another, she was ready to paint their cheeks. I looked around once again and realised that except for a few people, all of the attendees' cheeks were painted with the Japanese national flag on the right and a green shamrock on the left.

After a while, Chika led off by extending her gratitude for the crowd's attendance. While warning them that the volunteers were not allowed to receive any money that day,

the attendants were divided into four groups, and each group was asked to go to various allocated spots across the city centre. The core members started giving out group T-shirts provided by Mitsuba. Handmade Japanese flags, one-metre long white cotton squares on which a red circle was sprayed in the middle, were also distributed to each group. Further items such as a few handheld Japanese flags, colour pens for messages, as well as AJD's advertisement were also provided. When everyone was about to leave for their allocated place, they started taking off their outer clothing – heavy coats, jackets and pullovers – so as to let the message on their T-shirts be visible to the public. The eye-catching slogan 'Japanese Earthquake and Tsunami' in black ink on the front stated the obvious. With flags in hand and T-shirts on, my group of eight marched to an area called Temple Bar. At Temple Bar, we were further divided into two sub-groups. Our team had three Japanese females and one Polish girl who was a friend of a Japanese volunteer. While two girls held a one-metre long flag against the street wall so that people could easily write messages, the other two held small flags and called out to tourists walking nearby to leave messages on the bigger flag. Mari in our team was wearing a salmon pink coloured yukata. Tourists coming up to us glanced at Mari's outfit as well as at the flags we were holding in our hands. "Are you Japanese?" This was the first phrase out of people's mouths. Most of the tourists expressed their concern about the disaster: "I'm so sorry for what happened to your country." Most of these tourists were willing to take a pen and write messages. The volunteers called out: "We are collecting messages for those affected by the tsunami and earthquake!" This call resulted in filling the flag with encouraging comments written in various languages.

Implications of the national flag

The flags, group T-shirts, the white boards bearing the words 'Japan Needs Your Help' along with images of devastated sites, as well as yukata became the necessary equipment for fundraising activities from then on. What I particularly want to highlight about the day of fieldwork described above is, first, their usage of the national flag. As noted in Chapter Three, the legislation relating to the national flag (*hinomaru*) and anthem in 1999 illuminates Japan's contested war history mainly because the national flag and anthem have been perceived as reminiscent of pre-war Japanese imperialism and militarism (Aspinall and Cave 2001; Befu 1992; Karasawa 2002). Together with the fact that the national flag remained unchanged after the Second World War, the flag and anthem came to symbolise Japan's aggression in Asia and the Pacific in the eyes of Asian countries, whereas the rejection of these symbols was based not only on the fear of being seen as an ultra-right-wing conservative nation but also is an expression of pacifism on the part of Japanese citizens (Befu 1992: 33, 42). The controversy over the use of the national flag and anthem emerged particularly within the education system. Exemplified by an event in which high school students and teachers protested against the principal's decision to enforce flying the national flag and singing the anthem at the school entrance ceremony (Aspinall and Cave 2001), the use of the Japanese national flag and anthem remain contested. Nonetheless, observing the national flag painted on their face that day, the issues surrounding Japanese people's association with their national flag appeared less contentious.

Indeed, as in the case of Chika who recalled her childhood memories of the national flag, only a handful of the participants in later interviews were able to describe any

association with the national flag in everyday life back home. Chika said: "My family used to deck the entrance of our house with flags on national holidays. Most of my neighbourhoods did the same." The somewhat out-of-date term *hatabi* (flag day)[5] conventionally defining the practice of flying the flag on nationally set holidays since 1949, is nowadays less heard of and less seen particularly around urban areas. Yoshie, the 27-year-old female working holiday maker, too talked about her thoughts about the occasional use of the national flag in her hometown Yamaguchi, located about 750 km to the west from Tokyo. Yoshie explained that it was part of quotidian reality to find a 50cm-wide flag stuck on walls on the dates of, for example, August 15th (the anniversary of Japan's surrender in the Second World War), New Year, the birthday of the Shōwa Emperor's (1926-1989) and other national holidays. Here, I must emphasise that the practice of raising the flag was not a custom peculiar to those who grew up outside the urban areas, yet, it is a dying practice in most parts of contemporary Japanese society. Another participant Emi, a 24-year-old working holiday maker, who regularly participated in AJD activities, commented:

> As I grew up, my view on its custom [flying the flag] changed. The more I learnt about Japan's historical relations to other Asian countries, the more I became sceptical about the meaning of the national flag. I don't know if the flag is a good thing…To be honest, there was a great deal of resistance about using the *hinomaru* during the AJD's activities.

For Emi, the flag was a signifier of patriotism. Yet, regardless of her emotional struggle, she found the use of the national flag beneficial to present AJD as collective Japanese.

[5] It was in 1949 when GHQ withdrew the restriction on the display of the national flag. Yet, the legislation limited its exercise only to national holidays (Cripps 1996: 81).

Emi's view exemplified the theoretical presumptions about the national flag that persistently signified Japan's dilemmas in relation to the way in which pre-war history was taught in Japanese schools which led to political protests over the national flag and national anthem that only ended in 1999. Despite conventional ideas of what it represented, there was an indication of a shift in the ways that the Japanese engaged with it. Contrary to my assumption that these national symbols invariably recalled pre-war contexts, there is evidence that the majority of my participants expressed a positive engagement with the use of the national flag; they regarded it as a mere symbolic object representing a collective national identity wherein the negative connotations of the imperial past were fundamentally of less importance. "I had never thought about it [the meaning of using the national flag] until you asked me!" Kayo replied to my question as to the use of it. Echoing Cripps's (1996: 75) claim of a generational gap that exists in relation to the understanding of the conflict over the national flag and anthem, the predominant reaction to my inquiry about the use of the national flag as well as in the face painting was the absence of any political contestations over it in people's consciousness, as represented by Kayo's comment. Rather, a positive association with the national flag seemed to signal the arrival of a new phase in the national discourse.

Yet, several participants, particularly those in their thirties, showed a high level of awareness about the symbolic meanings of the national flag. As Hiromi, the 37-year-old student, commented: "If we were in Japan, we would have to consider the implications of the flag in relation to our history. But we have no reason to be ashamed of displaying

our country's flag outside of Japan." She felt that the display and utilisation of the Japanese flag in a foreign setting did not necessarily carry the same connotations as in the homeland. She confidently stated: "I wanted to make an appeal for Japan in this emergency situation more than anything." Although Hiromi's view acknowledged the controversial issues pertaining to the national flag, her interpretation of using the national flag was rendered less important. This symbolic icon was not perceived as a politically-nuanced object constructed in the post-war context but rather came to be reinterpreted as a form of symbol that enabled Japanese migrants to relate to a collective Japanese unity, and with this purpose this object was not interpreted as a 'dishonourable' symbol. Contested orientations inherent in the national flag were expressed as in her statement: "I always envy the Irish people wearing an Irish tricolour uniform and waving an Irish flag at football matches without any hesitation." There were a few of my participants, including Hiromi, who expressed empathy towards the Irish for their colonial past and a nationalism constructed in contradistinction to the British Empire. They saw the locals waving the Irish flag on St. Patrick's Day as having a positive association with their national symbols and thought that Irish nationalism was not as contested as its Japanese counterpart. In a similar vein, the unsettling contestations of the war past demonstrated through displaying the national flag were further reflected in Otone's opinion. Otone remarked: "What we should be ashamed of is not about displaying our flag, but about the reality that we are forced to hold complex feelings about these things [flag and national anthem]."

Their conflicting feelings about the national flag did not assume a wholehearted acceptance about incorporating the contested symbol into their lives. Yet, evident in

these narratives was an inclination of my participants towards building a favourable relationship to the national flag. Anderson (1991: 141) reminds us that nations often inspire self-sacrificing love. In the case of Japan, the *hinomaru* lay at the heart of Japanese war memories. Self-sacrifice was practised in the name of the Emperor, that is, the state. Such national symbols as the flag representing "sacredness and inviolability" were used to instil patriotism (Befu 1992: 26). This, of course, is not limited to Japan. Marvin and Ingle (1999) argue that patriotism is the civil religion of modern nationalism in America centred around rituals in which the sacrificial death of soldiers in war is fundamental to maintaining the cohesiveness of the nation. Drawing on Durkheim's theories about the totem, they argue that the American flag is situated as the symbol of this ritual and thus is rendered sacred. In contrast to the national flag in the domain of the sacred, an omnipresent image of the flag in the popular domain is more accessible for citizens and hence it can be "*touched*, *multiple*, and *dismembered*" (1999: 220, emphasis in original). The popular flag then becomes a commodity to be consumed in various social contexts and can be reconstituted to accommodate people's own needs, thereby an identification with the community is iteratively imagined and forged. In the case of my participants, the unprecedented scale of the disaster certainly bolstered the participation of the Japanese in charity activities, and by extension the relationship to the Japanese state. The implications entailed in the practice of adopting the national flag were that the volunteers experienced a sense of unity to the nation via associating with the flag. *Hinomaru* became the vehicle for bridging the gap between Japanese migrants abroad and the nation. Simultaneously, this imagined community was open to any individuals in sympathy with the aim of AJD. Therefore, whilst for Japanese volunteer the national flag was a symbol of shared national belonging, for non-Japanese

counterparts who gave a hand to AJD, holding the Japanese flag was merely a cosmopolitan expression.

'Traditional' outfit

In juxtaposition with the national flag that functioned not as a contested symbol but as a symbolic object to represent a collective Japanese identity, a similar logic accounted for the adoption of the Japanese outfit, the kimono, as a manifestation of Japanese heritage. On one bleak afternoon in March, I encountered Hiro at the AJD's very first fundraising weekend held in a local shopping centre. Out of approximately 50 volunteers, he instantly drew my attention due to his outstanding outfit. Whereas all other male volunteers were dressed in casual clothing, his body was dressed in a yukata. I greeted him and asked him why he wore such a thin layer of clothing. He was clearly shivering in the cold wind, a wool scarf wound around his neck. Wearing *geta* – Japanese style clogs – with bare feet and exposed toes arguably made him feel colder as the pitiless winter wind blew into the building to freeze us. Even though my iPhone weather information showed six degrees celsius, the wind chill made it seem colder. He said with a smile: "Freezing cold, isn't it?" The next weekend, I found him again at the street collection on Grafton Street. He recognised me when I came up to him. He said: "It's as cold as last week!" But he was wrapped in the same thin clothes as the previous week.

As described in Chapter Four, Hiro's hometown was in Kyoto. As is common amongst people from Kyoto where the use of such Japanese clothing is more entrenched in everyday life than in other regions, Hiro had many occasions to wear the yukata when

he lived in his hometown. I asked him why he bothered to bring a set of yukata with him over to Ireland. “Of course, to get attention!” He answered humorously. He continued: “I knew that it’s not customary for Japanese males to wear traditional outfit. This is why I brought it with me. It’s a showy costume.” He wore his own yukata to nearly all the charity occasions he attended so as to stand out from the crowd. He explained: “I thought the priority in this situation was to get attention in order to convey the message that ‘We are Japanese, we had a disaster.’ Otherwise, without this outfit, who can tell we are Japanese?”

From the very first event on St. Patrick’s Day where approximately 100 volunteers joined, there were always a few volunteers, predominantly females, showing up in yukata whenever AJD held an event. Yukata was preferred to kimono by my participants for its ease of wear. Perhaps, the board on which was written ‘Japan Needs Your Help’ most eloquently revealed where the people in AJD came from. Yet, there was a view articulated by those in yukata whom I had met through the AJD charity activities that the local people would not recognise the volunteers’ nationality, hence the purpose of their collective actions. However, criticism about the display of the yukata was made by some participants, such as: “Such a type of outfit should be used only on festive occasions or for something merry. Even for a charitable purpose, I don’t think it’s appropriate to wear it. The disaster is not something you celebrate.” Indeed, the volunteers demonstrated various responses to the use of these objects at AJD activities. Although charity activities were not perceived as the right context in which to deploy yukata to several participants, the utilisation of this clothing explicitly was of great help to demarcate the ethnic boundary that set the Japanese apart from Asian Others,

particularly from the Chinese or Koreans. The employment of yukata served to indicate Japanese ethnicity and engender a substantial increase in awareness of the presence of Japanese residents among the local audiences.

In the course of fundraising activities, the locals responded favourably to AJD actions. Although a group of Asian people, with some wearing an ethnic outfit, often stimulated much curiosity about the nationality of these people among the locals, AJD members typically received encouragement, monetary support and at times compliments on the aesthetic beauty of the yukata outfit. AJD charity activities not only provided a social nexus between Japanese migrants and the local community but also made otherwise faceless Japanese visible in the local context. Borrowing from Siu's (1952) discussion of the sojourner, the migrants' social expression of solidarity in the form of charity action nonetheless remained symbolic. Siu argues that whilst the sojourner firmly maintains the material and emotional ties with the homeland, the sojourner's life is fundamentally alienated from the host community, seldom engaging in community affairs unless they are related to his own interest or his homeland matters. The sojourner is only "performing a function" of his own ethnic group "rather than a person with a social status" in the destination society (ibid.: 36) and thus the sojourners activities are essentially considered as symbolic. Whilst the empowerment of a collective of Japanese was made possible through the tangible markers of Japaneseness such as the national flag and kimono/yukata, the use of these objects facilitated a traditionalising process for Japanese migrants. Indeed, as the kimono woven with wartime imagery acted as a visible manifestation of national unity during the Asia-pacific War (Atkins ed. 2005), the practice of wearing an ethnic outfit in Dublin was conducive to inducing a sense of

ethnic and national identity. The ethnic outfit was an important vehicle for expressing a distinctiveness from the Westerners as well as other Asian people.

As a result of the Meiji Restoration (1868), a sartorial reform took place as part of modernisation processes. Western clothing was stipulated as the formal dress of the Imperial Court (Slade 2009: 54). In modern Japan adapting to Western customs was a visualisation of Japan's ability to compete with the West, while simultaneously the kimono gradually lost its utility in daily life. The kimono is nowadays rarely worn and has become a ceremonial dress associated only with formal, religious and ceremonial practices such as weddings, funerals and tea ceremonies. The kimono has been reinvented to be a marker of tradition particularly for Japanese women (Assmann 2008; Goldstein-Gidoni 1999; Slade 2009). Hence, it is considered that adopting 'traditional' outfit was a way for the participants to represent themselves as traditional subjects as well as presenting themselves as an 'inviolate Other' (Kuwayama 2004).

In this sense, the kimono situated in the terrain of tradition underlined the idea of Japan's historical continuity along with other such symbols. This distinctive style was a workable strategy in the context where Japanese ethnicity was not discernible. Thus in the cases of Hiro and the girls' donning of the kimono, we saw a manifestation of their conceptualisation of Japan as being rooted in history and tradition, rather than associating themselves with the growing global subcultural image derived from manga, animation, cosplay and other practices that can be equated with 'modernity' for its communality of culture. As Smith (1995: 34) insists, whether an "invented tradition" is new or old, it too entails the continuous "remaking and redefining" processes. Their

self-presentation through a juxtaposition of 'traditionalised' objects was in this sense a practice of the formulation of this traditional framework, which in turn they experienced as traditionalising subjects.

Whilst the constant renewal of invented tradition occurred, an adherence to the notion of tradition re-oriented the participants within a framework of historical continuity where individuals were merged with an imagined national and ethnic unity. As I have discussed in Chapter Four, ethnicity is a socially constructed category of identification, emerging through social contacts (Eriksen 2010: 23). The recognition of Otherness shaped in relation to the shared imaginations of culture and the past marks one's sense of belonging to a specific ethnic group. Therefore, the notion of ethnicity serves as "a cultural construct, a version of themselves which different peoples adopt, emphasise and proclaim as evidence of their distinctive identity as a people" (O'Tuathaigh 1991: 54). Hence, wearing the kimono implied a retreat into the collective framework of the Japanese so that cultural symbols made them visible. This general socio-political practice, represented by Hiro's example, was a very effective method to adopt.

Whilst the depiction of the traditional has been nonetheless a form of exploitation for political or cultural needs, the concept of tradition was equally employed by Others to reinforce such Japanese images. This was articulated by Chika who wore her yukata a few times, acceding to the event organisers' requests. Chika commented: "Actually, I felt reluctant to use the yukata for the charity events. Everyone links the yukata to an image of Japan. Such thinking is like a lantern sold at a tourist spot. It draws attention but in such a way that it is oversimplified." Chika was bemused when she was asked to

wear the yukata on the occasion of the benefit gig where she had to present herself in public as a representative of the group. She further said: “They also asked me if I can play the *shamisen* (thirteen string Japanese zither). I don’t like to be categorised into such a stereotypical image of Japanese. It’s too straightforward.” Chika’s bewilderment reflected her resistance to their projection of a monolithic construction of Japaneseness onto her.

As Nagatani and Tanaka (1998: 3) remark, the portrayal of Japan as “the immutable Other” did not result from a “one-way” approach but “has been reciprocated by Occidentalism from within” (see also Miller 1982). For instance, in his analyses of the representation of Japan in American anthropology textbooks, Kuwayama (2004: 137) suggests that the image of the kimono as a signifier of Japaneseness carries “symbolic significance” by presenting “a higher degree of Otherness” to the outside community – to Americans. The intensive attention to a particular everyday practice in such decontexualised circumstances dramatises the Other and portrays such Others as “more exotic, more strange, and more distant” (ibid.: 130). Although Chika did not attempt to contest the homogenising representation of Japanese and rather found it beneficial for the sake of the group, evident in these narratives was that the tradition-oriented consciousness about self-presentation was equally exploited by the Irish. The employment of self-Orientalisation was congruent with the Western yardstick in its construction of Japan. Therefore, this traditionalising practice was underpinned by a two-way recognition of difference.

In the circumstances where only through tragedy could the Japanese gain public attention and thereby became more visible subjects in the Irish context, the charity activities pertaining to the disaster illuminated the underlying difficulty of manifesting Japanese subjectivity. As scholars are concerned with the relational presentation of the self (Bauman 1996; Nagel 1994), the individual's strategic exhibition of the self is subject to its utility. Indeed, subjective construct of ethnic boundaries is not always compatible with an external imposition. For instance, Nabekura (1997) points out the discrepancy of the manifestation of ethnicity that surfaced in nation-building process in Singapore. The incongruity between what he calls 'formal ethnicity' that classifies ethnic divisions with state power and 'informal ethnicity' projected by individuals shows that ethnicity is always subject to negotiation and hence its boundary is in flux. In the case of my participants, shared history, emotions, cultural heritages and practices that are imperative for narratives about the nation and ethnicity emerged through relational processes of social positioning. The display of Japaneseness was strategically made in an attempt to enhance the level of recognition of the Japanese in Dublin. Through this process, they presented themselves as Others to the host society. And this also helped reconnect themselves to historical continuity of Japanese.

Conclusion

In contrast to the previous chapter that discussed my participants' various reasons for leaving Japan and their attempt to shake off the existing roles and identities, this chapter demonstrated that the 3.11 event ironically contributed to reinforcing a sense of belonging to Japanese society and reconstructing a Japanese collective identity. The

post-3.11 phase served to mark a brief shift in the way that they developed ties with Japan and participated in the local society. In the wake of the 3.11 disaster, a sense of collective affinity with the people in their homeland was elaborated into a social expression that was enacted through the form of collective acts of charity activities. All categories of Japanese residents in Dublin, including otherwise withdrawn young men and dispersed Japanese wives, extended aid to AJD as well as other organisations so as to raise a public awareness of Japan's predicament and of the existence of Japanese people in Dublin. The migrants' involvement in volunteering was best understood as a means to cope with their complex sentiments towards the predicament that their homeland was facing. From the ways in which the 3.11 disaster prompting a sense of unity with the nation gave way to a feeling of obligation for AJD, it was evident that AJD created roles to fulfil as a Japanese person. Their practices of building a horizontal affinity amongst Japanese residents in Dublin as well as a temporal linkage with Japan that they had left represented that this particular migration experience significantly affected their personhood in a way that tied my participants to Japanese society once again.

Moreover, experiences of shared acts in turn made visible a collective Japanese existence to the host society. A coherent articulation of the representation of Japaneseness was attained by means of employing symbols such as the national flag or by wearing kimono. These objects lent themselves to demonstrating their Japanese roots and thereby helped the Japanese migrants emancipate themselves from a liminal status. In this context, the objects used throughout charity activities were crucial to understanding part of the migration rhetoric; as much as one's subjectivity is

transformed by migration experiences, transnational flows created room that allowed for a capacity of designating new values. The gap that existed between the implications of the *hinomaru* in Japan and in a foreign land was evident. Although symbolic national objects have become controversial through a post-war Japanese discourse, the national flag was nonetheless used as the vehicle for expressing national unity. Rather than the national flag being seen as an invariably problematic and politically-nuanced symbol, a new mode of symbolic usage provided various ways of interrelationship between people and objects. Given the reality that the representations of a recognisable Japanese identity were made possible through the display of the national flag, it would appear that a foreign context turned into a space in which to reconcile conflicting ideas about such stigmatised national symbols.

The problematic practices of raising a flag and embellishing one's body with such symbols were arguably in this context freed from past stigmas. Hence, it is more appropriate to understand that the popular reading of underlying implications of the national flag was erased and that it became a re-contextualised cultural resource and was used simply as a means to link the Japanese migrants to their homeland. Simultaneously, this 'traditional' mode of self-presentation marked Japanese ethnicity. Re-contextualised cultural symbols like the flag and the kimono/yukata were not merely tangible signifiers of their ethnicity but became a medium through which the participants began to contemplate their relationship to the nation-state as well as what it meant to be Japanese in a moral sense. This indicates that migrating to Dublin gave rise to a new sense of collective belonging. However, there is no doubt that the 3.11 disaster was an important, if extreme, platform through which their sense of national and ethnic

belonging was heightened. So how do they experience a process of being Japanese in everyday life?

Chapter Six: Identifying the 'Other': encounters with the West and Asia

> I am speaking about the 'real' Ireland that tourists can't see. They only go to Temple Bar [the touristy Soho area in central Dublin] and think that the Irish are all very friendly. But they don't know that drug dealers are usually making their transactions in the back street of that area…though those young Japanese with a working holiday visa are living in Dublin, they don't know the real face of this city.

On a February afternoon in 2011 during my first lengthy interview with Megumi, she noted from experience that Dublin was inherently so dangerous that Asian people were at high risk of physical harm. As we saw in Chapter Four, Megumi was a 34-year-old work permit holder, working in Cara Cheshire House as a care worker. During her seven years of living in Dublin she had seen serious physical assault a few times; on a snowy December evening the previous year, she had been dragged by a purse snatcher for twenty metres to the tram track as she hung on to her purse; there was also an incident near her place in which she was hit on the head with a bottle by a child under the age of ten.

A few months before our drink in a pub swarming with young locals and foreigners in Temple Bar, Megumi had spoken about these experiences in front of four young Japanese migrants who had been staying in Dublin on student or working holiday visas. Her stories at that time included the most serious incident of all, which had occurred in a local hotel lavatory five years previously. Drawing a neatly folded newspaper clipping from the corner of her electronic English dictionary case, she related to us in detail the attempted rape as shown in the newspaper article; the arrested man was consequently sentenced to five-years of imprisonment. The stories of these incidents involving

Megumi as the victim of the assaults left the four young Japanese speechless. “I’m not telling my stories to everyone. But I just want those young Japanese people to be more cautious about their own safety in this city.” Megumi commented at a later date that it was to inform them about how the city was fraught with danger, which short-term residents might experience but continue to overlook. Megumi’s experience was a fairly extreme case of the physical assault that a visitor might face while living in Dublin. Certainly, encounters regarding racial difference were not to be expected before travelling to Dublin. Yet, encounters with verbal and physical violence primarily resulting from racial discrimination were the prevailing reality of Dublin that most of my participants confronted.

In this context, what impact did this violence and racial discrimination have on their identity? The preceding chapter analysed Japanese migrants’ experiences of the 3.11 disaster in which a sense of nationhood was integrated into the roles that they felt they had to play as a Japanese person. This chapter examines dimensions of Japanese migrants’ national and ethnic identities from a different perspective. The processes of identity construction involve a recognition of the self through others (Friedman 1992; Hall 1996; Raz 1992). In their post-migration experiences, the participants were faced with various forms of ‘difference’ in encounters with others. The day-to-day experience of a different culture inevitably led to a process of identifying as the Other, which in turn marked their uniqueness vis-à-vis others. This chapter is concerned with the ways in which my participants interacted with Others in everyday life, as well as how encounters with Others altered their embedded images of the West and Asia, and ultimately impacted the processes of constructing their identities. In the processes of

delineating national and ethnic identities, economic and cultural capital that they had possessed played an important role in drawing distinctions between self and Other and re-enacting their economic and cultural privilege in their new lives. Through examining these processes of negotiating their positionality in Dublin, this chapter illuminates how their desire to transform their identities intersected with an increased sense of being Japanese in the post-migration phase.

Idealised the West

On a late afternoon in July 2011, Aoi showed up in a black suit at our agreed meeting place, a café in front of TCD. As she had just come from a job interview, our conversation over a coffee became an opportunity for her to unwind from the stress of the interview. Yet, I still could see a worry dominating her thoughts. It was the recent bankruptcy of her business school that was bringing additional concerns about her future. Aoi at the age of 36 previously had worked as a software engineer in Japan. I had met her in the early stages of my fieldwork at the Japanese-Irish meetup in which she had been involved as the only Japanese organiser, but I became better acquainted with her through AJD's fundraising activities during the spring. Despite her background growing up in western Japan, I could hardly discern its regional dialect in her speech, although this was not the case when she conversed with people who spoke the same or similar dialects. She always spoke polite standard Japanese and switched depending on the situation. Her smart appearance and such Japanese speech mannerisms appeared to speak of her thoughtful yet resilient character.

Aoi's first experience of Ireland dated back to 2001 when she travelled to Tipperary with an Irish friend whom she had come to know while in Japan. She described her first visit to Ireland as "an experience of rural life," wherein she had discovered a life of simplicity.

> All my life I lived in an urban setting, in my home as well as in Tokyo to work for seven years. I had never lived in the country before. So I was very frustrated by the rural environment of Tipperary in the beginning. There was nothing but cattle bellowing and a few small shops in town…It had a life-altering impact on me. There was electricity in the home [her friend's house] but no electric cooker. Can you believe that? Burning turf and placing a cast iron plate in the fireplace, they cooked all of their meals over two hours. The open fire provided all of their home's energy needs. On top of that, food waste was used as a fodder for cattle. They lived a self-sufficient life.

That eye-opening experience of living in the countryside marked a significant change in her life orientation. Her connection with Ireland was followed by sequential visits over seven years.

> I started to feel differently about what I was doing with my life in Japan. My work always kept me very busy; usually, it required me to stay as late as 10 p.m. or 11 p.m. in the office, sometimes to sleep overnight during a hectic job. I worked as a systems engineer for eight years, but I wasn't confident that I could continue that lifestyle for another 20 years. I wanted a job that would allow me to face human beings, not a computer screen.

Having become deeply captivated by the beauty of nature and a life of simplicity, she had begun contemplating her work-centred life as well as the materially saturated living environment. A particular fondness for the non-urbanised land gradually nurtured her

desire of getting to know more about Ireland. Her desire to live an alternative life involved a change of profession from software engineer to tour coordinator of Ireland.

Aoi had chosen Ireland as the context in which another life-changing experience was expected to happen. Amongst my participants, there were the cases in which, as we saw with Aoi, some people had come to Ireland with a keen interest in the fields of Irish folk and pop music, literature, storytelling, religion, art and dance. Yet, for many of them, Ireland was not the destination of first choice. Having had neither a high degree of emotional affinity with, nor a particular interest in, Ireland, the majority of the participants had chosen Ireland as a replacement after failing to obtain a U.K. visa. Even though the participants' aspirations towards the West developed through constant exposure to the Japanese social media that portrays a Western-inflected cultural modernity, Ireland was essentially within the overarching cultural construction of 'the West.' Indeed, as discussed in Chapters Four, most Japanese students and working holiday makers had set off on travel to Dublin without any contact or any explicit picture of their destination itself. Although quite a few of these people had had various types of contact with foreign cultures prior to migration, including foreign travel, previous working holidays and short-term study abroad programmes, their cross-cultural engagement was predominantly confined to North America and Oceania. Not only did many of the participants find Ireland as well as Europe to be a new environment, but it was also their first experience of living abroad for any length of time. With the ease of obtaining an Irish visa, central to their decision-making for travelling to Dublin were the benefits of living in an English speaking country: the fact that there were only a small number of Japanese residents in Ireland was thought to be a

benefit to them in terms of English-language acquisition. This shows that most participants had had hardly any knowledge of Ireland, but Ireland has nonetheless gained public recognition as a country next to the U.K. at best. As in the case of Masaki in Chapter Four who described his decision to go to Ireland as "the biggest adventure in my life," the decision to go to such an ostensibly minor country as Ireland was often discussed as if to attest to the bravery of the migrants for embarking on a journey to an unfamiliar land.

In terms of destinations migrants travel to, there are cases that ancestral and cultural connections between the societies of origin and destination (Wilson *et al*. 2010) or migration trajectories shaped through networks of kin and friends (Limpangog 2013; White 2010) determine patterns of mobility. However, these mobility paths contrast with the independent travelling outside of such transnational connections that my participants undertook. Ireland was culturally distant from Japan since Ireland has never been identified as having its own political-cultural significance for the Japanese. In addition, unlike destinations like London where abundant economic opportunities attract lifestyle migrants (Conradson and Latham 2005), Ireland did not offer career opportunities or a path leading to permanent settlement as I detailed in Chapter Four. As Conradson and Latham (2005: 290) point to the importance of considering what particular destinations offer for lifestyle migrants, it is crucial to understand why my participants decided to travel to Dublin.

In the case of my participants, the choice of Ireland as their destination was rather linked to the ways that Ireland was imagined. Their Occidental longing was voiced in

terms of cultural diversity, tradition, English-speaking environments and physical characteristics of Westerners. For example, Mai, a 23-year-old degree student, emphasised the images of Europe as being societies valuing tradition, while differentiating from America she and her parents perceived as a dangerous place to live in. With an emphasis on the benefit of improving her English skills in Ireland, she had chosen Ireland as a study destination where her older sister too had already commenced a degree programme. Although their images of Ireland were only vaguely articulated, travelling to a western city and making contact with Westerners were commonly seen as contributing to the acquisition of the lifestyle of the West, ultimately leading to developing their cultural capital. There were assumptions amongst the participants that all western cities would have cosmopolitan environments wherein they would be able to engage with cultural diversity, develop the ability to have a command of English as a lingua franca and possibly have a romantic relationship with Westerners. Central to their construction of Irishness were such romanticised images of the country. And having the luxury of appreciating natural riches was also perceived as an important part of western quality of lifestyle.

Such cultural imaginations of Ireland were embedded within a path towards a fulfilling life undertaken by my participants. The role of imagination is an important aspect in the practices of migration. Scholars stress the roles that the mass media play in constructing and circulating images of a particular place to live (Appadurai 1996; 2001; Fujita 2009; Nagatomo 2015; Salazar 2014). As Appadurai's (1996) concept of mediascapes speaks to the role of the mass media in the ways in which the force of the imagination impacts one's social life, imagination plays a significant part in creating particular visions of a

self and lifestyle. The representations of the West developed through Japan's long-term association with played a part in their imagining of Ireland as a cosmopolitan destination. Cosmopolitanism, defined by Harnnez (1990: 237) as "an intellectual and aesthetic stance of openness toward divergent cultural experiences, a search for contrasts rather than uniformity," reflects the propensity of an individual to deal with the inevitable encounter and coexistence with Others in the contemporary era. For my participants, cultural experiences of Ireland/the Irish, and by extension the West/Western Others, were perceived as offering pleasurable experiences (cf. Bauman 1997). Their decision to move to a Western city interlinked with such cosmopolitan images that the participants had held of the West.

Also, their Occidental longing was linked to the desire for a better quality of life in the country in a manner similar to counter-urbanisation. Counter-urbanisation is an important aspect to understand the outflows of lifestyle migrants. And this characteristic partially parallels the Japanese migration to Western societies. Popularised images of Ireland, with a particular emphasis on spectacular rural landscapes represented by green fields stretching as far as the eye could see, cottages or sheep, were obscurely formed through cross-cultural contacts made in Japan and imageries transmitted through the media or found in travel brochures. Such imaginative representations of Ireland, by extension the West, as offering a lifestyle of nature-oriented often incite the act of migration. Indeed, such prevailing perception of Western countries was commonly cited as a rationale for Japanese youths travelling to other Western destinations such as Canada (Kato 2010) and Australia (Andressen and Kumagai 1996; Sato 2001). Whilst Western cities have been a major migration space for the Japanese, rurality represented

by nature appeal to those seeking for a better quality of life. Dublin was affordable access to a Western modernity that enables them to enhance their cultural capital.

Markwick (2001: 41) argues that three themes of Ireland's representations – "landscape, culture and time" – are typically featured in tourism: the images of picturesque landscapes of verdure rural idyll, daily routines associated with nature in rural contexts as well as an ancient history have brought about a surge in the heritage industry, and have been strategically selected, exhibited and marketed for external consumption (ibid.: 42). Although these thematised images of Ireland as encoded in advertising may reflect only a partial reality of Ireland, Markwick claims that these prototype images perpetually fix Ireland's representation in contradistinction to modernity, becoming a source of nostalgia for urban inhabitants such as Aoi. She continued:

> Actually, living in Dublin is not to my liking because I find the lifestyle in Dublin not so different to the one in Japan. But I have no choice but to stay on in this city as I have a part-time job and school…I don't see much culture here. What I mean by culture is music and dance – things that are deeply entrenched and practised as part of people's lives in the countryside. I'm not saying that these don't exist in Dublin, but this city is too touristy to feel like 'rich' culture.

Ironically, when Aoi sought the means to cover the cost of living while engaged in her study, it was her previous career that provided the primary source of income. Feeling conflicted about leveraging her previous work experience and present status that had put her in an urban setting similar to Japanese cities she had been based in, she saw the life in Dublin as an extension of her life in Japan. For her, Dublin shared the characteristics of a consumer society and failed to be authentically Irish. This conflicted with her job as

a tour coordinator that would compel her to show aspects of the not 'real' Ireland to clients according to their needs. With a growing impatience and frustration about leading an urban life, she continued the quest for a 'real' Ireland – an environment of rich nature and 'unchanging culture' – within the capital city.

This perception of the authenticity of a place connects the discourse of authenticity discussed within lifestyle migration. The migrant's desire for an improved quality of lifestyle is typically exemplified in their decision to move to a rural place. Narratives of lifestyle migration are commonly shaped within dichotomous accounts of the rural and urban (Osbaldiston 2011). The pursuit of authenticity reflects the desire for a lifestyle allowing for being "individualistic and creative" (ibid.: 221) in the "warm, friendly, and sociable" surroundings (ibid.: 223). The lifestyle in the country, thus, is perceived to be a path leading into self-authenticity, contrasted with a lifestyle in the city where the authenticity of a place is diminished. Simultaneously, however, the pursuit of authenticity anchored within the rural-urban dichotomy is challenged by Griffiths and Maile (2014). In their exploration of the lives of the Britons in Berlin, their participants' appreciation of the rural qualities in the urban context, such as "green spaces" or "mud" (ibid.: 152) does not refer to actual rurality but indicates "a set of imagined values and representations" (ibid.: 153; see also Benson and O'Reilly 2009). Berlin in this case embeds their desire for mobility, freedom, creativity, the sense of individuality, independence and belonging, as well as the experience of a rural way of life (ibid.). Thus, these representations are imagined in a way that allows them to pursue what they think of as an authentic way of lifestyle. Given the roles that cultural imaginations of a particular place play, a relocation to an urban destination like Dublin in the case of my

participants embedded their anticipations of authenticity in terms of a Western modernity and transforming the self and their identities. Therefore, the contradiction of the participants' yearning for an idyllic locality yet culturally advanced life reflects socially circulated imaginaries of the destination that embodied their personal aspirations. What they thought of as Ireland was informed by their own construct of the place.

What is the 'real' Ireland?

During the early stages of their stay in Dublin, however, Japanese migrants became aware of various forms of difference concerning lifestyle and the social environment in the city. In general, the migrants engaging in schooling had very limited access to local social life. As the meetup nights and the Saturday language exchange sessions were the major social points of contact with the local Irish for them, no other social space than these Japan-mediated ones provided them with contexts in which they could feel that they were having Irish experiences at the intimate level. For students, their social networks were therefore predominantly based on relationships with foreign students from their schools, whereby shared English-language barriers often acted as a medium for emotional connection between them as I will touch on it later in this chapter. In contrast, quite a few working holiday makers actively sought part-time employment to subsidise their living expenses as well as to gain new experiences that might lead to discovering something more meaningful in life. Nevertheless, even for those who had successfully obtained work, close interactions with Irish people were seldom observed in their everyday lives. This was due in part to the type of jobs that they obtained,

ranging from low skill jobs – such as those of cleaners or au pair –, to Japan-specific jobs, typically serving jobs like waiters/waitresses. As Robertson (2014) argues that legal structures regarding migration policies influence migrants' labour market participation and self-exploration processes, the participants experienced great difficulty in accessing professional works. The availability of works in the above fields was essentially targeted at non-Irish people, consequently preventing Japanese youths from meeting the locals. More saliently, many Japanese youths found great difficulty in reaching a circle of native speakers of English largely due to a sense of inferiority about their English. All this relegated them to a marginal existence in Irish society.

In fact, there were very few cases in which Irish people were incorporated into Japanese people's social circles. Other than degree-students who had better English skills and better opportunities to socialise with the Irish in everyday life, only the 25-year-old working holiday maker Chika appeared to have a close relationship with Irish people. Her Irish flatmates and their friends, who were all artists, introduced her into their circle of friends, taking her to art galleries, inviting her for Christmas dinner and teaching her about Irish culture. She told me: "If there is anyone with an interest in Japan who wants to talk with me, s/he would think me special for being Japanese. But for those who don't, I am only a foreigner. Conversations following 'How are you?' are very difficult."

Compared to other Japanese temporary migrants, her two part-time jobs created more opportunities to interact with the locals, and she endeavoured to merge with the Irish and people at her workplace. Nevertheless, Chika felt that there was an 'intangible wall' between them and preferred to spend her private time with a group of Japanese friends.

She described how she had to speak English and work with non-Japanese people when she was on duty, thereby engendering the need for time to unwind with Japanese people in her off-time. This indicates that she demarcated emotional boundaries between Japanese and non-Japanese people, locating the former in the private sphere and the later in the public one.

Those engaging in neither a job nor schooling found themselves with even fewer opportunities to get acquainted with the Irish. Inevitably, impressions of the Irish were formed without in-depth personal interactions being involved; many of which were derived from casual interactions in residential and public areas, including casual communication in eating venues and public institutions. Therefore, living in communal spaces with the Irish was an opportunity that provided Japanese migrants with a broad framework of knowledge about Irish people. In relation to this, the participants were able to stress a range of practices exercised differently in the domestic sphere. Chika expressed her surprise at the differences in performing household chores by her Irish flatmates. She said with a perplexed yet somewhat amused expression:

> They don't rinse soapy water off from the dishes or clean off food particles stuck on the plates, and then stack them directly for drying. When I once asked them why they didn't clean dishes properly, they replied "detergent is organic, so it's alright." So I have to wash the plates again before using them. There are too many things bothering me with regard to communal living…I think that I have become a tough person after coming to this country. If you were fastidious about cleanliness, you wouldn't be able to survive. They kindly let me share some of their dishes, but I noticed that they cooked those from unwashed vegetables and fruits. I tried not to look at the cooking process and ate the dishes. I'm just so tired of paying attention to every detail of what they do.

Adding to this, she described a wide range of etiquette lacking in the house, such as that mouldy food was left sitting in the refrigerator and that empty toilet rolls were not replaced. Whilst she demonstrated sensitivity to difference in habitual behaviour, the domestic manners of the Irish were seen as an impediment for maintaining a shared communal living environment for her and many other Japanese youths.

As I have discussed in Chapter Three, the representations of *gaijin* are significantly associated with ideas of "egoism and individualism," as well as freedom, and are depicted as such in popular discourse (Creighton 1995: 144-145). These images of *gaijin* that my participants had embodied were further exemplified through various levels of interactions with the Irish in the post-migration phase. The internalised idealised yet vague images of Ireland came to be seen as allegedly incompatible with what they saw as Japanese values. For instance, Yumi, a language student, spoke about the experiences of having had an egg thrown at her near the language school that she attended and of witnessing Irish youngsters on the bus putting their feet on seats and talking loudly. After experiencing a perceived lack of orderliness and witnessing disturbing behaviour, she stressed the importance of not importing 'their' practices and ideas into the Japanese context. As narrated by Yumi, for some, a Euro-centric worldview gave way to the idea that *gaijin* were no longer seen as threatening or superior; instead, the experiences of 'difference' prevalently designated the Irish as culturally inferior.

In a very similar manner, Japanese migrants began to describe the poor social

environment of Dublin by reference to its material backwardness. Nozomi was a 30-year-old student, taking a financial accounting course in a private college. Having taken up a part-time job in a pub immediately upon her arrival in Dublin in the winter of 2007, she recently embarked on a business venture with her former colleague while working in an English pub in Japan. Their business worked in tandem with local language schools to provide support concerning all aspects of Dublin life for Japanese students like herself. Because she was one of the few people who had come to Dublin with a specific enthusiasm for Irish music and art, she had been active in establishing a social connection with the locals. She told me her impressions of Dublin as follows:

> Life in Dublin has drawbacks and advantages. At first I found this living environment very inconvenient with regard to the quality of public services. When some shop announced that it would be open until 7 p.m., I just laughed at the absurdity of it [because typically most shops in Japan are open till very late throughout a week]. Had I lived in only this city, I wouldn't have found it ridiculous. But I know how things would be carried out back home so that I just can't help comparing Dublin to Japan…When it comes to the quality of public services, there is no place better than Japan.

Nozomi was originally from northeastern Japan but had lived in Kyoto for a long period. In comparison with Japan's urban cities that provide high levels of service to meet the needs of consumers, Dublin was perceived as falling behind by her. The differences associated particularly with the quality of infrastructure services became the benchmark for the classification of the Western and Japanese societies. As White (1992) argues, European societies are essentially seen as "traditional and status orientated" somehow similar to Japan yet qualitatively not so advanced. Similar accounts of Western cities were offered by Fujita's (2009) research conducted in New York and London. Her

Japanese participants' reasons for travelling to Western countries did not merely stem from the desire for a Western modernity, but also because the West was seen as "familiar" or "similar to Japan" and they expected to feel comfortable in their destination (2009: 171). This view was echoed by all of my participants who expressed their frustration about having to put up with the inconvenience of everyday life in Dublin. In light of the technological advancement and material affluence that the migrants had enjoyed while in Japan, Dublin was seen as a dirty, underdeveloped and rough place, contradicting the ideal image about Western cities that the participants had held. Yet, Nozomi seemed fulfiled in her life in Dublin. The job that ensured a source of income and expanding social contacts provided her with a place of belonging in the local society. It appeared that she occasionally participated in meetup events in which I had met her first. She explained to me that her former colleague in Kyoto, who was then her business partner, had been the only Japanese contact at the early stages of her Dublin life and that this was the reason why she frequented the meetup venue so as to meet more Japanese people. She did not seem to have the intention of returning to Japan where she would have to build her career from scratch and hard work was seen to be the norm. Mentions of Japanese as over-diligent and polite were cited as characteristics of the Japanese. I asked her if such representations of Japanese would be true for her, she responded immediately: "No, I am exceptional." This implied that she was not willing to live a life saturated with work. Despite all the complaints attributed to cross-cultural differences, she came to see Dublin as a place that allowed her to carve out a freer and more desirable lifestyle than Japan.

Given these perceptions of Dublin, the profile of the city and its people began to

subsume contradictory orientations; as Aoi stated, Ireland as a country was characterised by its rich nature, a life of simplicity and of freedom at one end of the spectrum while simultaneously, at the other end were experiences of violence and unsophisticated manners. Ireland was supposedly a modern Western state, but became linked with an image of underdevelopment. Along the course of gaining firsthand life experiences in the Western nation-state, their embedded vague yet positive images of Ireland and of the West in general as superior examples of a social state (Morris-Suzuki 1998), were overwritten by 'the reality' of living in the city. This often resulted in the de-mythicising of the migrants' longing and led to extolling Japanese societal orderliness and virtues. This, as Tsuruta (1998) points out, evidently indicates post-war Japan's successful assimilation to Western material culture.

As seen in the narratives, certain practices and characteristics that Japanese migrants experienced in their everyday lives were considered to be uniquely Irish. For instance, the perceived sloppiness of manners in public, different approaches to personal hygiene and poor customer service in the service sector in Ireland were thought to reflect the level of civilisation of the Irish. This was contrasted with the racism-free, a high degree of social orderliness and civility of Japanese society and people. Indeed, identifying this sort of difference easily falls into the trap of 'cultural difference' rhetoric (Hall 1996: 3; Sakai, 2005: 6). Also, O'Reilly and Benson (2009: 9) note that post-migration experiences engender "the tension between reality and imagination" and thereby reinforce the migrant's liminality (see also Salazar 2014). These cross-cultural encounters inevitably engendered the processes of relativising their own Japaneseness; the interactions with the Irish/Western Others and experiences of cultural difference

provided them with the opportunity to identify both positive and negative aspects of Japan and Ireland. This process also led to an assumption of a cultural incommensurability that served to set the Japanese apart from the Irish, making it as Japanese distinctiveness.

'I'm not Chinese!': the Japanese as faceless Asian Others

Just as Japanese youths encountered Western Otherness in their post-migration experiences, another type of the Other came into play in triggering their national and ethnic consciousness. Ethnic distinctions were also drawn between other Asian populations, in particular 'the Chinese' and South Koreans.

"I'm still pissed off with the guy," said Nozomi. She was leaning against Subway's store window on Westmoreland Street. The sounds of the bustling high street were muffled as evening deepened into night. In contrast to her strong language, Nozomi was nonetheless wearing a smile when speaking about the random person whom she had encountered a half an hour previously. Earlier that night in mid-April, Nozomi was at the benefit concert held in Temple Bar. The charity gig titled '*Ceòl* [music] for Japan: Japan Earthquake/Tsunami Benefit Concert' aimed to raise disaster-relief funds in support of the victims of the unprecedented disaster that had struck northeast Japan one month previously. This charity event hosted by AJD in partnership with Japan Ireland Association and Experience Japan[1] was one of the main events among a series of

[1] 'Experience Japan' is the annual Japanese festival launched in 2011. The festival takes place in the Phoenix Park in early April and aims to introduce Japan to the locals through its culture such as music, story-telling, a *kendo* (Japanese fencing) demonstration, dance, food and a variety of workshops. This project was set up by Motoko Fujita, the Japanese photographer residing in

fundraising activities of AJD, in which she had been involved as an organiser. After the charity gig successfully ended, the organisers enjoyed their privileged invitation to the musicians' after-party held in a V.I.P. room around Harcourt, and improvised music was played into the wee hours. At 2 a.m. Nozomi, an Irish organiser and I eventually decided to end the long night of music. It was when she was unlocking her bicycle to head home that a young drunk man approached her, slurringly asking if she knew any homonyms for the word '*nihao*' (hello in Mandarin). Nozomi giving him a stern look, said in annoyance: "I don't speak Chinese!"

We walked to the Subway on Westmoreland Street, where we stopped to talk. Nozomi expressed her anger at being mistaken for Chinese. "I always challenge those asking me things like that [*nihao*], by asking back "Are you a racist?" This silences them," she said half in jest.

> Those who have an interest in Asia know that I am from a well-off country, but there are some other people who assume that I have come to Ireland as an economic migrant...I can't understand why they [the local Irish] simplistically presume that Asian looking people [in Dublin] are all Chinese, Thai or Filipino – Is that all they think about?

Nozomi went on to explain that throughout three and a half years of living in Dublin, she had sporadically experienced this 'ethnicity confusion' issue with the Irish who presumed that Japan was a developing country in Asia. The rage simmering under her

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Chapelizod who is also the wife of an Irishman, and was initially designed to bring together all the Japan-associated societies and institutions for Japanese solidarity. The collective expression of Japan is aimed both at Japanese residents and local audiences to enhance the recognition of Japan.

smiling face was directed, not simply at the drunken man, but rather towards the public perception of Asian people in the Dublin context.

It was not only Nozomi who became overly sensitised to the simplistic assumptions about a person's nationality, even if it was a relatively harmless, casual interaction as she had encountered that night. Similar anecdotes were relayed by many of the participants. For instance, Tomohiro expressed his dissatisfaction with the fact that the local contextualisation of Asia led to relegating the Japanese to the category of faceless subjects. He said:

> One day, someone said to me, "Are you not Chinese? How are you Japanese different from Chinese?"…Maybe he meant no offense when he said that, but I felt a bit frustrated, not at his having lumped Chinese and Japanese together but at having naively said something like that. It's difficult for Asians to distinguish the nationality between Europeans, and this is the same for Europeans about Asians. I just got irritated by the fact that he didn't consider this simple logic.

Together with there being a small number of Japanese residents in Ireland, social contact with Japanese culture in the public arena was limited to 13 Japanese restaurants across the city and the aforementioned 'Experience Japan' festival. The paucity of Japanese cultural signifiers in the public sphere contrasted starkly with those of China, underpinned by their well-established community. Wang and King-O'Riain's (2006) research on mainland Chinese students residing in Ireland reveals that the Chinese have built a strong social network that provides support for housing, education and jobs for both newcomers and residents. This collective effort to maintain ties with people within Ireland and the homeland reflects the establishment of local Chinese social media such

as a radio station and newspapers easily accessible in Chinese supermarkets. The fact that the Chinese ethnoscape comprises a number of restaurants and supermarkets on Capel Street and on Parnell Street,[2] which have come to be unofficially known as Dublin's Chinatown (ibid.: 49-50) is seen as a visual marker of East Asian ethnoscape, arguably contributing to the notion of its becoming the dominant representation of East Asia. Therefore, that Japanese people were far outnumbered by Chinese and that the fact that Dublin lacked a social space for collective and spatial representations of Japan, led to a difficulty in the manifestation of Japaneseness. To external audiences, the ethnic boundary between Japan and China was difficult to draw. For instance, when going out with my participants to pubs, I occasionally would come across locals taking part in a pub quiz, and who would bet on the nationality of a group of Asian looking people. In the designation of Otherness within the Irish context, Japan was subsumed into an overarching framework of the Asian Other.

Such local contextualisation of the Japanese as faceless Asian Others was also interrelated with their social standing. Sumire, a 31-year-old student, related the experiences of unfair treatment resulting from the low social standing of Asian people, which typically involved ethnic slurs. Sumire said:

> Once when I was walking around Grafton Street, teenage boys came up to me and mocked and shouted at me…On my way back home on the same day, even in Dublin 4 [a wealthy area] I encountered the similar antisocial behaviour…Do you know the recent news that Japan had loaned the IMF to help them out of their

[2] As of August 2011 when my fieldwork was about to finish, this street accommodated five Chinese supermarkets, ten restaurants and three other China-related shops. These numbers are overwhelmingly large, compared to that of Japanese (one restaurant) and of Korean (one bar/restaurant).

economic predicament?[3] I got frustrated by such experiences, thinking that my taxes became part of the money that the Japanese government lent to this country because their parents don't work.

As many became resigned to the fact that ethnic discrimination was an avoidable fact of life in Dublin, today racism exists as part of 'real' Ireland. Anderson (1991: 149-154) contends that the notion of racism rests upon ideologies of class within the nation. Originating from European domination in the nineteenth century, racism typically involves the structural dominance of the power of the colonised. Although race and ethnicity are kindred terms, the notion of race does not entail shared cultural characteristics amongst groups of people and rather creates an overarching, historicised subjectivity (Eriksen 2010: 9). The construction of a hierarchy on the basis of race and ethnicity that develops within a particular historical context is profoundly associated with ethnicisation or racialisation of particular ethnic communities by the dominant group (Castles and Miller 2003: 53; Weiner 1994: 7). In recent years, racial assault at an individual level, along with institutional and collective racism (Onyejlem 2005: 73), has become a pervasive social problem in Ireland (White 2002). Much of the upsurge of xenophobia, ethnic discrimination and racism is attributed to the domestic changes brought about by inward migration. As discussed in the Introduction, Ireland has begun to reshape itself from being a homogeneous society to becoming a multi-ethnic state in the face of the arrival of new migrants which has accelerated drastically since the 1990s (Mac Enri 2001; 2004). Through this process, a dominant Irish culture is unified on the back of the "exogenous recognition" of other ethnic groups (Titley 2004: 16). Therefore,

[3] Sumire was referring to the news that in December 2010 the Japanese government loaned Ireland, through the IMF, one hundred and ten billion yen (equivalent to one billion and twenty million Euros) to facilitate the bailout of the Irish banks (Yomiuri online December 31st 2010) .

the recognition of a minority that espouses a dominant-subordinate social model works hand-in-hand with the construction of a unified Irish identity.

Reflecting this tendency, there was a high rate among Japanese migrants of experiencing some form of physical threat or discrimination on the basis of ethnicity during their stay in Dublin. Anti-East Asian discrimination in various degrees, ranging from the serious physical violence that befell Megumi to such a trivial issue as '*nihao*,' which in fact almost all my participants experienced, were an inevitable consequence of Ireland's rapid social transition to a multi-ethnic state. Ethnic slurs and the associated racism that Japanese migrants had experienced were at times random acts of hatred against ethnic groups; paradoxically however, those ethnic taunts were in most cases pointed at the Chinese. Words such as 'chink' or 'go back to China' led to anger over being mistaken for the wrong Others. Therefore, what they felt as their predicament was believed to partly stem from the fact that Japan was not properly recognised in the local context. Perhaps, given the rapid growth of Irish economy that has invited in-flows of economic migrant populations, it was natural for the locals to assume that foreigners residing in the country were economic migrants. While the participants developed a sense of a lack of public acceptance, an extreme example noted by Mutsumi, a 29-working holiday maker, indicated that she had internalised the idea that "it's a common view that the Chinese are an inferior race" and that Japan was essentially superior to other Asian nation-states. These narratives of social exclusion encapsulated Japanese migrants' fundamental dilemma resulting from the ambiguous position of Japan in Ireland; despite Japan's influential role in global politics and economy, it was essentially seen as a nation-state constituting one corner of the East Asian region. As

discussed in Chapter Three, Japan strove to achieve equal footing with the West through the post-war economic success that contributed to subverting the nation's sense of marginality that Japan carried since the Meiji period and was further imposed by their defeat in WWII (Iwabuchi 2002: 7).

Japanese postmodern nationalism has been nurtured by the development of popular culture as a form of soft power (Cassegård 2014: 42). The country's economic development in the post-war era and its cultural influence played a fundamental role in shaping the nation's pride at being the leading nation-state in East Asia and served as the grounding for the development of a postmodern cultural nationalism (Befu 1992; Iwabuchi 2002; Yoshino 1992). This modern Japanese ideological discourse was constructed against the backdrop of its economic and soft power. It was evidently embedded within my participants irrespective of differences of gender, class or the place of origin: it fundamentally framed Japanese national and ethnic identity. In their stays abroad, the participants began to embrace this national and ethnic consciousness by aligning themselves with Japan's improved international status. Hence, the common occurrence of being 'mistaken for Chinese,' or the portrayal of Japan as being the same as China and Korea, only upset the migrants' ideas about Japan's economic and soft power – in contrast to its previous colonial power – over its neighbours. The discrepancy between Japan's hegemonic status in Asian contexts and a sense of marginalisation stemming from the juxtaposition with other Asian nationals, posed fundamental questions about their positionality as Japanese.

Striving for distinction

This dilemma substantially contributed towards young Japanese migrants moving away from 'Asia' and it was revealed in their socialisation patterns. Almost all my participants stated that although there was little opportunity to meet and interact with Chinese people in their everyday life, the Chinese were at times deliberately excluded from the lives of Japanese migrants. Hiro's life in Dublin, the working holiday maker discussed in Chapter Four, underlined such a tendency. Hiro had been exposed to foreign cultures since his childhood and had already acquired good English proficiency; the main objective of his stay in Dublin was not to gain new experiences but to simply enjoy a temporary freedom from a life heavily burdened with work. After the first six weeks of home-staying in Malahide, he moved to a Georgian house inhabited predominantly by Japanese young people like himself. He described the reasons for remaining within a social circle of Japanese people.

> I hesitated to live with Japanese people in the beginning because I could have felt bothered by having to be attentive to my behaviour in the house. But except for that, no deposit was required, all the bedding was provided. Besides, the communal areas of the house are always kept tidy and clean because they [the housemates] are Japanese. It's a comfy place to live in.

He explained that despite his initial concerns, he had benefited from living with other Japanese, in that sporadic part-time jobs were found via the housemates, and that leftover food was made available for anyone with an empty stomach. "We [amongst the Japanese residents] have built a special bond." He said and described their close friendship as having developed through mutual support to the extent that all the residents in the house went on a 'house-trip' to Spain in the summer. Because there were

no social places of interaction other than the Japan-Ireland meetup for him, his home and housemates – all young Japanese except for one Korean student – inevitably played a pivotal role in creating a comfortable life for him. His life in this relaxing environment was also reflected in the type of people with whom he chose to socialise:

> I now have a lot of Korean people in my social circle, whom I got to know through my Korean housemate. But as for the Chinese, I don't even want to talk to them. They have no second thoughts about assuming that whoever they think looks Asian is Chinese. Even when I tell them that I am Japanese, they don't care what I have said. They just keep on talking to me in Chinese…They don't have English. They are migrant workers, aren't they?...It's just my impression that mainland Chinese cannot speak any English. Even if they can, they do with a very strong accent…They gave me a sort of puzzled look as if saying "Why do you not speak Chinese?" This idea is very wrong and I don't like it. So, I tend to avoid the Chinese as soon as I distinguish people as having Chinese nationality…What I don't like about them is their self-righteous bigotry. I felt anger inside and wanted to say "Listen to me, I am neither Chinese nor speak Chinese!"

Hiro continued to express his opinion of Chinese people. He explained that in his understandings 'China' denoted mainland China, thereby Taiwan and Hong Kong were not inclusive of his understanding of China. Despite his experience of having had a Taiwanese girlfriend in the past, he appeared to show little interest in getting connected to anyone of Chinese origin. His reluctance to incorporate Chinese people into his life was a way to assert the cultural and economic privileges that enabled him to embrace the local culture through English-language. A sense of superiority engendered by his economic privilege not only served to render a strong sense of affinity with Japan's economic and cultural power but also led to displaying open contempt for the Chinese.

Hiro was by no means an exception in this regard. Being mislabelled Chinese was perceived as provocative to a Japanese ethnic sensibility for many of the participants. As a result of the encounter with 'misplaced' ethnic discrimination, some of the people whom I interviewed, as in the case of Nozomi, explicitly expressed anger and claimed their 'correct' nationality as a form of protest against the imposition of a homogeneous East Asian subjectivity. These people problematised the term '*nihao*,' understanding that it carried a connotation of racial bigotry which subordinated East Asians to the mainstream Irish. For them, it was necessary to demarcate an explicit boundary between the Japanese and other Asian populations. Simultaneously, the ways in which they reacted to what they thought of as an experience of racism levelled against them, evidently illuminated the continuing racism against the Chinese.

In order to emancipate themselves from this predicament and enhance their social position, Japanese nationality and ethnicity were asserted often by excluding Chinese from the migrants' social circles. Most of the participants expressed little or no interest in connecting with any Chinese because, with a particular emphasis on the Chinese as the ones needing employment, they were considered incapable of sharing in local life or in the objectives of a life in Dublin with Japanese migrants. As Aoi commented:

> I feel fortunate to have been born a Japanese. I saw many international students in my business school struggling with their lives. They had come to Ireland in order to make a life for themselves. But for Japanese people, even if the recession in Japan has affected our lives, there are always jobs and we don't have as serious problems as those students do.

Drawing on the difference in economic levels between Japan and other countries,

particularly Asian nations, she suggested that her freedom of choice as to where she would travel and how she would make a living was something she and other Japanese people benefited from, given the economic affluence that the nation had achieved in the post-war period. The difference in economic levels resulted in the assumption of the difference in lifestyle and cultural levels. The migrants typically pointed to a variety of rationales for their sense of superiority over the Chinese, stereotyping them as being uppity, noisy, impudent or having boorish manners and wearing outmoded attire. Such biases and an ambiguous sense of antipathy against the Chinese stemmed more from the negative image of the Chinese portrayed in the media within the Japanese context, than from animosity grown out of personal interactions. Stereotype is defined by Eriksen (2010: 29) as "the creation and consistent application of standardised notions of the cultural distinctiveness of a group." The migrants' remarks on the Chinese were occasionally expressed using the popular term '*mindo*' (民度). The Kodansha Japanese-English Dictionary (1976) defines it as the cultural standard; but this term encompassed a set of derogatory views of the Chinese as falling short of Japanese cultural and economic levels. Much of this idea was based on the disparity in economic development and associated social orderliness between the two countries, characterised by differences in technological advancement and public services. Japanese formalism, morality and a seemingly higher level of cultural capital than 'the Chinese' also became a rationale for such differences. However, when we think of the social status of the Chinese in Ireland, it is in fact not so very different from that of my participants. In 2008, students accounted for 43 per cent of the total Chinese population in Ireland. They were mostly in their twenties from urban regions, who came to Ireland in order to seek educational and professional opportunities (King-O'Riain 2011: 207). These students

were typically involved in low wage jobs to finance their studies and lives in Ireland, and resided in Ireland temporarily just like my participants. Yet, Japanese migrants used Japan's economic and cultural modernisation in order to present the country's superiority over the Chinese. A national consciousness built on this sentiment in turn indicated Japan's economic and cultural proximity to the ideals of the West.

Whilst "successfully modernized" Japan joined the Western nations (Iwabuchi 2002: 7) during the post-war period, scholars agree that since the 1990s recent economic growth in Asia has influenced Japan to re-focus on Asian regions, thereby facilitating the development of Asianism and an overarching Asian identity (ibid.; Machimura 2003; Morris-Suzuki 1998). Nonetheless, China was seen to represent Asia's backwardness amongst a majority of Japanese youths living in Dublin, demonstrating that the fixed ideas of ethnic stereotypes constructed within asymmetrical power relations between ethnic groups continued to persist. It was within this ambivalence that the migrants strove to shift the perception of them as faceless East Asians to being seen as economically, culturally privileged Japanese. The dilemmas created by these external representations of Japan and individual subjectification processes, represented Japan's international position as neither fully assimilated into the West nor into Asia (Klien 2002: 22). Lodged between Asia and the West, the participants began to share an awareness of belonging to Japan wherein economic and cultural capital have been structurally accumulated. Hiro and other participants explicitly pointed to the perceived inability of Chinese to acquire or access cultural and economic capital, and thus their sense of cultural superiority was constructed based on Japanese privileged access these forms of capital. For instance, the ability to speak English, even if not fluently, or the

knowledge of Western mannerisms were considered to index levels of internationalisation. The migrants' disassociation from the Chinese was thus best understood as an attempt to decouple themselves from the Irish attitude that saw economic and cultural backwardness embedded within the discourse of Asia.

Simultaneously, in this negotiation of their positionality, Japanese migrants tended to homogenise the Chinese as falling under the broad umbrella of economic migrants by eliminating class, occupational and ethnic diversity amongst the people seen to belong to this category; likewise, disregarding the heterogeneity among Taiwanese, Hong Kongese and overseas Chinese, in most cases they were all subsumed under the overarching category of 'Chinese.'[4] Ironically, this process of othering the Chinese took place in the very same way in which Japan was reduced to 'East Asia' in the local context. This only served to reproduce an essentialised framework of Asia as a persisting single entity.

The emergence of Asianism

Prominent amongst my participants was that the recognition of neighbouring Asian nations emerged only after their migration to Dublin. Tamaki described her perception of the world:

I was very surprised by the fact that Asian people know about Japan very well,

[4] This dilemma of Chinese homogenisation is addressed by people seen to belong in this category. For instance, Yau's (2007) study on second generation of Chinese demonstrates their difficulty in identifying themselves with such homogenising subjectivity. Their sense of ambivalence is also contrasted with 'new' Chinese sojourners, who are mostly students from mainland China.

> about Japanese pop-culture like singers and films. I mean, I'm only speaking about Korean people though [as she socialises only with the Korean other than Japanese people]…But for example, I have no knowledge of Chinese culture whatsoever. This is unfair to them…Of course I know a bit of K-pop [Korean pop culture] because of the recent upsurge of Korean Wave, but as long as you live a normal life in Japan, you wouldn't have a chance to learn about other Asian cultures, right? So it was not until they talked about Japanese culture that I realised that Japan has a lot of influence especially over Asia. Only Europe and the U.S.A. came to mind when I thought of the term 'world,' not Asia. I think I should broaden my perspective of the world.

For many people like Tamaki, encounters with Asian Others in their post-migration experiences triggered an awareness of Japan's neighbouring Asian nation-states and made Japanese migrants question their Western centrism.

As I have discussed, this tendency was reflected in their socialisation patterns. That strangerhood in a foreign country was a common experience served to bind this particular type of marginal people together (Simmel 1950: 407). Whilst antagonism directed at the Chinese further contributed to drawing a line between themselves and Asian Others, it was evident amongst my participants that they were willing to develop friendships with Koreans, allowing them to become a significant part of their network of friends as we saw with Hiro. There was a tendency amongst the participants to develop a close relationship with Koreans over the course of their stay in Dublin. This was due in large part to the fact that Japanese students had better opportunities to interact with Korean students in the language schools that they attended, or at their workplaces and residences. An example was Ruriko, a student at the age of 37. She told me that she became more familiar with Koreans and European students than with the

Irish over the last six months. Nariaki, a 28-year-old working holiday maker, similarly commented that whilst 95 per cent of his friends were Japanese, the rests were Koreans with whom he found similarity in terms of a perceived mind-set. Going to a language school, he was hoping to befriend non-English native speakers, not the Irish, because of his inability to speak English. In the context where non-English native speakers developed a shared sense of insecurity grounded on a sense of inferiority in language use, a majority of Japanese youths were prone to placing themselves within groups of Japanese fellow students or working holiday makers of their own age, while lamenting how little their English ability had improved; Japanese migrants tended to befriend non-English native speakers such as the Koreans and other Europeans. These people came to form bonds of friendship through their shared experience of social exclusion, a sense of marginalisation and the joys of new experiences in Dublin.

Occasions in which the Japan-Ireland meetup or the Saturday language exchange frequently accommodated Korean attendees and at times Hong Kongese, were also instrumental in exposing Japanese youths to people from other Asian countries. Asian experience in a third context appears to be common. White's (2006: 127-129) case study of young Japanese travellers in Hoi Chi Min reports their growing awareness of a pan-Asian consciousness. Shared cultural and regional heritages were imagined in a way that provided a common frame of reference for them to develop an Asian sense of membership. Also, in her study on Japanese youths living in New York and London, Fujita (2009) reveals that her participants in the London group maintained intense feelings of superiority over Taiwanese and Koreans, whereas the New York group developed an intimacy with these neighbouring Asians due to the similar level of

industrialisation of the two countries to Japan; and interestingly, her study demonstrates that in both groups mainland Chinese were classified as "racial insiders" yet "cultural outsiders," indicating the cultural incommensurabilities with mainland Chinese (2009: 79, 91-92). Although the ways in which people develop socialisation patterns are unique to each context, what can be suggested from the above studies and my research is that the lives following migration are conducive to endangering a sense of sharing pan-Asian belonging. In the case of my research, socialisation patterns amongst the participants that developed primarily through their daily lives reveal that it was Koreans who were incorporated into the participants' lives in most social settings. Otone, the oldest degree-student amongst my participants, told me that she studiously avoided contentious political and historical issues rooted in the colonial past between Korea and Japan in order to prevent a deterioration of their relationship. Even though a relationship with Koreans was delicately maintained, it was often the case that Korean people were seen as having not only cultural commonalities with but also a similar capitalist culture to Japan, unlike Chinese people. An imaginative solidarity grew as the result of 'discovering' a set of commonalities with Koreans which in turn facilitated a sense of belonging to a different vision of Asia; that is, the idea of Asia in this sense was grounded on shared cultural heritages and the possession of high cultural and economic capital, in which 'the Chinese' were essentially absent. Such class-based processes of othering were a basic framework that most of the participants employed in order to confirm Japanese cultural and economic superiority over general Asian Others.

From the ways in which the participants chose people to socialise with, class and habitus are a key to the understanding of their post-migration experiences. Clearly, their

class positions and habitus played out in creating a sense of sameness and difference, serving to enact their social positioning in Dublin. The participants' habitus and various forms of capital set the scene for post-migration lives. Habitus and capital carrying into a new life in the destination undoubtedly characterise experiences following migration in a certain manner, because migrants typically begin to face the need for distinction only after moving to a new social environment (Torresan 2007: 115). In the case of my participants, they became aware of their belief that they possessed high capital resources through experiencing how Others perceived their capital and habitus, and this process was interrelated with their social positioning on the basis of class.

Migrants become integrated into the class relations constructed through race and ethnicity in the destination society (Glick Schiller *et al*. 1992: 14). Collectivities such as race, ethnicity or nationality are an important aspect of determining the migrant's positionality. Various forms of capital do not simply replicate in post-migration lives. When there is an unsettling ambivalence in their positionality, migrants revise their habitus in order to adjust to a new social environment. Various scholars discuss the reflexive practice of re-enacting migrants' social standing in the destination. In her study of migrants of Caribbean middle-class backgrounds, Olwig (2007) notes that cultural capital, particularly high educational level, is considered to be of utmost importance to their sense of having a middle-class status. In order for them to get integrated into the local white, middle-class strata and distinguish themselves from the lower classes of the Caribbean migrants, achieving high levels of education and learning colonial European oriented cultural skills are central to maintaining a middle-class livelihood for the Caribbean migrants. Ong (1999) similarly discusses the ways in

which Hong Kong elites in California attempt to convert their economic capital into other forms of capital, by which eventually leads to reproducing symbolic capital that they had in Hong Kong. Torresan's (2007) case study is another telling example of how migrants negotiate to respond to such a mismatch between their possession of capital and symbolic capital in the destination society. Torresan details the struggles of middle-class Brazilian professionals living in Portugal to re-enact their middle class identity within the local representation of Brazilians as being former colonial subjects. In the context where ethno-racial hierarchy is shaped due to the colonial past between the two counties, middle-class Brazilian professionals developed strategies for adjusting to life in an attempt not only to escape from the perception of Brazilians held by the Portuguese as being economically inferior and morally uncivilised but also to reproduce their class status. Just as these examples demonstrate the dilemmas resulting from a gap between their capital and symbolic capital constructed along the lines of nationality, ethnicity and class, the participants navigated their privilege and symbolic capital, and attempted to reproduce it.

As the social distinction of an individual is prone to be reproduced through migration, being placed into a new social context in fact did not erase but rather illuminated and reproduced their habitus informing the embodied dispositions and capital in their post-migration lives. In the ways in which their assumption of sustained privilege gave way to the processes of negotiating between their capital and social standing in Dublin, the articulation of class distinction became an important matter to their sense of being Japanese. And notably, their habitus was not significantly altered through migration. The persistence of class distinction following migration is discussed by Oliver and

O'Reilly (2010). In their exploration of British lifestyle migrants in Spain, Oliver and O'Reilly document their participants' continued engagement of classed distinction in their post-migration lives. Despite their yearning to transform the self in a new life, their socio-economic distinctions remain highly influential in determining the extent to which migrants are able to explore 'a new self.' Since class continued to mediate a renewal of habitus in the case of my participants, there were limitations to the extent to which individuals are able to transform their habitus. Therefore, a 'reflexive project of the self' in Giddens' term unfolded, but was simultaneously constrained by structures, capital and habitus (Benson 2014; Oliver and O'Reilly 2010).

Having said that, an association with Asian Others did not always result in an increase of antagonism against them or in ethnocentrism. Whilst some of the Japanese youths whom I interviewed articulated an increased awareness of a collective Japanese identity along with retaining a bias against Chinese people, a few of my participants came to embrace changes in relation to these Asian Others. These people were typically engaged in jobs that provided them with frequent contact with Chinese workers at their workplaces. Yukiko was one such person who underwent a positive change in her view towards the Chinese. She described how interactions at the workplace had contributed to a shift in her perceptions of Chinese people. Yukiko, a 32-year-old student, was just about to enter her third year in Dublin. Her part-time job in a Japanese restaurant located to the south of the city centre was a significant part of her social life as well as the major social point of connection with the Chinese.

> I had kind of stereotypical images of the Chinese in the early days of my work at the restaurant. I thought that I would not be able to make friends with them. In my first

> year, there was one Chinese staff member in the restaurant, who wasn't really nice to me, and my impression of the Chinese remained the same. I felt that she looked down on me as well as Japanese people in general. But in my second year, we had a very approachable Chinese staff member in the kitchen who endeavoured to build a good relationship with everyone working in the restaurant. He's always concerned about me, sharing some food with me and asking for example whether or not I'm tired. His verbal expression is always very polite when asking for a favour from me…My working experience with Chinese people in the restaurant has drastically changed my view of the Chinese in general. What I learnt from that experience is that I shouldn't assume all Chinese are the same.

Despite her internalised negative images of the Chinese as being greedy and impudent, she developed a deeper appreciation of the underlying reality of lives of Chinese people having to live as labour migrants in a foreign country and working hard even in oppressive working conditions.

Similar to Yukiko's experience, Kaori, having worked for another Japanese restaurant as a waitress for six months at the time of interview, described a positive impression of her Asian colleagues. Kaori, at age 27, a working holiday maker, had had little idea about how the world outside Japan would look before she set foot on foreign soil. Her first experience of overseas was Paris, which she visited when her four-year university administrator employment contract had expired. After the trip, she thought that despite already having embarked on a new job search, a "once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to live abroad" was worth trying out before settling down to a new job. "I still can't believe that I made it here," stated Kaori, while she enjoyed a pint of beer on her day off in the eighteenth century church that had been converted into a bar. She had chosen Dublin as her destination with the idea that Dublin would be an affordable place to live and that

Ireland's countryside looked appealing to her. "But when I came over, I found the city a lot dirtier than I had thought. Still, Dublin has become a special place for me." She spoke of Ireland with affection.

At the time of the interview, her time for leaving Dublin was just around the corner. In retrospect, she explained that the most difficult time in Dublin was when her three-month English course ended. "I was very nervous then. I was of marriageable age but I was neither married nor working, doing nothing but travelling abroad and hanging out with friends." She conveyed her story in a somewhat guilty tone. After struggling to find a source of income to live on and a reason to stay on in Dublin, the waitress job came along. "There is something I can do in this city. That was the happiest thing." Her *ikigai* and new role in Dublin became her new job at the restaurant, and the workplace became an important social point of contact with people from Asian regions, with whom she had never had the opportunity to associate until then.

> I've started to understand about Chinese people. I eat lunch with Chinese workers [working at the Chinese buffet restaurant adjacent to her Japanese restaurants]. They never eat their lunch quietly and keep yammering on and on [using Mandarin among them]. But it's their culture…When talking with Asian people, I don't feel as intimidated as with Europeans [because of my lack of confidence in speaking English]. I feel secure when I'm with them because we are the same 'race' (*jinshu*)… At the beginning of my stay in Ireland, I wanted to prove my Japanese identity every time I got mocked with the word '*nihao*.' But now, I've started to wonder why they [the Irish] look down on Asians or the Chinese.

Owing to day-to-day interactions with Chinese, Filipino and Overseas Chinese co-workers at the workplace, Kaori built a strong sense of affinity with Asia and began

to incorporate Asian values into her identity to the degree that she proclaimed that "I am Japanese but have begun to acknowledge that we [referring to her colleagues] are the same Asians." She gradually constructed the idea of 'Asia' as a collective entity comprising China and South-East Asian nations. The interaction with Asian Others at the grassroots level resulted in shifting her focus from emphasising cultural differences to the narratives of shared heritage. For Yukiko and Kaori, their day-to-day association with the Chinese and other Asian people, albeit not entirely true of all the Chinese whom they had encountered, served as a platform for altering their views on the Asian Other from seeing them as distant Asian subjects to their being part of a larger Asian cohort.

Whilst not all the participants who had an association with Chinese people underwent this positive transition, there were some participants who gradually came to identify their sense of belonging within the wider context of Asia. Given that the embracing of broader Asian values appeared to vary according to the degree of exposure to the social environment of Dublin, iterative practices reproduced habitus. In the circumstances where the participants faced the necessity of re-evaluating their social standing and adjusting their practices in Dublin, a renewal of habitus indexed the embodiment of new practices. This negotiation process between structure, habitus and practice is what Benson (2014: 65) calls 'a lifestyle migrant habitus.' As seen in the narratives above, what was evident in the patterns of capital accumulation amongst my participants was that they demonstrated a greater tolerance of ambiguity about their nationality and ethnicity while fundamentally locating themselves within the overarching construction of Asia.

Conclusion

This chapter examines the ways in which my participants developed a Japanese national and ethnic identity in their everyday lives. Prominent in the construction of a Japanese collective identity amongst the participants was an awareness of Japaneseness that was reinforced by interactions with the locals and Asians. Many of the Japanese youths whom I interviewed for the first time, came across to reflect on what it meant to be Japanese in Dublin. Little did they expect what they would experience. In the post-migration phase, their first-hand experience with the Irish facilitated a development of different ideas about Dublin, and by extension the West, whilst confirming the stereotypes of the Chinese in particular. On one level, Japanese national and ethnic identities were crafted vis-à-vis an overarching discourse about the West. Despite altered and conflicting perceptions of the West, the West was invariably situated as a point of reference by which the participants defined their sense of belonging to Japan; on another level, ambiguous representations of ethnic differences amongst other Asian populations, mainland Chinese in particular, further facilitated processes of othering. Thus, the othering entailed in this two-fold process articulated a Japanese national and ethnic consciousness. The recognition of national and ethnic consciousness seemed to take place in relation to Asian Others more strongly than to Western Others.

It was evident that migration experiences in their daily lives brought about transforming processes of their identities, as the participants became incorporated into the racial hierarchy of Irish society. Their pre-held capital had leverage in articulating their

national and ethnic belonging based on class. In socially unmarked spaces where ethnic diversity was not fully acknowledged, the Japanese remained faceless Asian Others. Japanese ethnicity was located within this discursive Asian representation. It is within this unsettling positionality of the Japanese that a national and ethnic awareness emerged to resist the homogenising forces which were seen to jeopardise Japanese cultural and economic privilege. A claim to Japanese nationality and ethnicity became a crucial response, in order to re-empower Japanese migrants. In this sense, although the participants delineated a Japanese collective identity apart from the West, they were simultaneously eager to decouple from a 'backward' Asia. Continually engaging in a class-based identification of ethnicity, many of the participants retained a monolithic view of Asians. Given that their objective for living in Dublin was partly in the hope of accumulating cultural capital, they reasoned that socialising with people allegedly inferior to themselves would not enhance their social status nor lead to any other form of capital. Thus, the encounter with Others was predominantly limited to the people seen to possess higher social status or those with a similar level of culturality, that is, Westerners and Koreans at best. Also, role-orientated Japanese values emphasising morality further affected the ways that they imagined themselves as morally, culturally bound with such superior values. This points to the fact that their cosmopolitan outlook was limited in scope.

This tendency ironically revealed the persistent importance of capital in their post-migration lives. Despite their desire to carve out 'a new life' or gain 'new experiences,' it was difficult for them to erase or change the past identities and habitus. In most cases, the jobs that they held in Dublin did not confer a middle-class status;

low-skilled jobs that they managed to obtain did not acknowledge the high levels of capital that they had gained in Japan. Likewise, my participants read the habitus of Others through various expressions, that is behaviours, language acquisition or life objectives in Dublin. At the same time, they drew on their previous status in Japan to differentiate themselves from Others; occupation, educational backgrounds and cultural references such as language competence, dress and the knowledge on Western mannerism were a marker of their level of capital employed to draw a distinction between those who seemingly lacked as the same level of economic and cultural capital as my participants'. Such class-based processes of othering the participants engaged in, which was also tied to status claims on the basis of ethnicity, emphasised and exemplified the re-enactment processes of the existing classed-habitus. Thus, their privilege constructed on the basis of ethnicity, economic and cultural capital continuously contributed to the processes of social positioning as 'Japanese' in their post-migration lives.

However, their views of Asian Others altered over time for the Japanese who had more opportunities to encounter them in their daily lives, and they thereby gradually embraced an overarching Asian identity. Everyday interactions with Asian people for a certain length of time served to create a fundamental shift in the role of the Chinese from being the Asian Other to one with whom the Japanese felt connected. Ethnic divisiveness between China, Korea and Japan, rooted in colonial relations and ongoing political tensions, was partially reflected in the widening gap between Japan and China, but mostly was absent in the Korean-Japanese relationships. This suggests that the habitus of some participants was renewed, and accordingly, their identities transformed

in a way that reinforced their belonging to Japanese collectivities. In the next chapter, I will further explore the interplay between the way in which the participants delineated a sense of being a Japanese man, woman and migrant, and how this impacted on their next transnational journey.

Chapter Seven: The next journey

On an evening in August 2011 near the end of my year of fieldwork in Dublin, I walked into a pub facing the River Liffey. The Irish pub, located at the corner of the O'Connell Bridge over the river running through the heart of Dublin city, had been set as the venue for weekly Japanese meetups since January of that year. Getting through the boisterous crowd, I made my way to the first floor of the pub. An A4-sized white announcement hung on the handrail of the steps, with the words: 'Area reserved: Japan Group 30 people 7 p.m.' written on it. This was to notify customers that one corner of the room on the first floor was reserved for meetup nights. On that bright sunny night around 7:30 p.m., I found that there were about ten people in the room, gathering around three small tables and having drinks. The crowd became larger by 9 p.m.. Amongst 48 attendees, I saw many new faces coming into the room and some old faces still remaining after my yearly attendance at the meetup.

That night was rather special. Not long before that I had learnt that eight Japanese regulars were about to leave in the coming week; most of them were going home, but some were moving to other English-speaking countries across the Atlantic Ocean. The news was announced by the Japanese organiser Aoi. Standing in the middle of the room, Aoi called out their names and informed us that they were soon to leave Dublin. The attendees in the room all applauded these young Japanese and gave loud cheers. Reminding me that my own time in Dublin would be ending shortly, I also wished them the best of luck, while at the same time wondering how they would make a fresh start in their next destination.

In this last ethnographic chapter, I will explore the ways in which their transformed identities intersected with transnational mobility. Japanese migrants' duration of stay in Dublin was certainly subject to their visa status. Choosing the next destination was of foremost concern to my participants, as the expiration date of their visa approached. The participants developed various identities and a differing sense of fulfilment through the experience of living in Dublin. How did the participants re-enact their life orientation, negotiate their personal sense of well-being and choose the next destination after sojourning in Dublin? Their diverse patterns of mobility will be considered in terms of how identity transformation and mobility were mediated by life stage, gender and the temporary nature of their migration experiences.

Hiro: returning 'home'

Hiro, a 26-year-old working holiday maker, never failed to talk to others with smile, bowing to greet Japanese people and used *keigo* with me. When AJD held the very first activity on St. Patrick's Day, he was the only person who arrived before the appointed time. "Japanese people ought to be this way," he jokingly stressed the importance of punctuality. His smart salaryman manner conjured up an image of corporate warrior.

On a May evening in 2011, I met Hiro for an interview. It was no more than four and a half months that he had spent in Dublin, but he already seemed to have built a plan for the year after the working holiday scheme. To my question of how he planned the next move, he responded: "I will most likely work for some parliamentarian." He replied in a

bland tone. It was a job arranged by his father who was a city councilman. Yet, he appeared to find the job offer not altogether unappealing. “Japanese politics have been really messed up. It feels that setting its house in order is *our* responsibility.” Implicitly indicating his dissatisfaction with the governmental response to the 3.11 disaster, he lamented over the public's scant interest in politics.

Whereas his sense of national consciousness was significantly reinforced, Hiro spoke of his desire to remain overseas. “If I could choose anywhere to live, I would want to go to Boston,” said Hiro. Drawing on the experience of visiting Boston for in-house training during his first year with the company, he remarked that Boston fit the bill in terms of a living environment such as an abundant variety of ethnic food and the convenience of public transportation service. “How about Dublin?” I asked. “[Here it’s always] cold, windy.” Only a few words came out. Whilst showing no sign of sentimentality about leaving Dublin, he expressed strong cross-cultural interests to the extent that staying overseas was one of the options for his future. Considering his international outlook since childhood and his foreign language ability in French and English, he evidently had a keen interest in adding more international experiences to his life. However, in view of his being the only son in his family, I sensed that, behind his remark, living in Boston was merely a pipe dream. He seemed resigned to conforming to his family’s expectations that he return to Japan, and in the not too distant future, to succeed to his *ie*. As I described in Chapter Four, he related to me that his parents inculcated him with the idea that he had to marry and succeed to the *ie* by a certain age. He added: “At the very least, it is my duty to join my ancestors after death.” Describing Japan as “the ultimate place to return,” Hiro never seemed to have doubted his responsibilities to his

ie. Though he had an older sister, he had been taught that he should take up his *ie* responsibilities by 40 years of age. His life continued to revolve around the *ie* ideology, which would confer a legal status of the head of his family and accompanying roles on him, and more importantly a sense of belonging and identity on him. Simultaneously, however, his desire to gain international experiences appeared to symbolise his yearning for an extended period of time exploring his own lifestyle before fully integrating himself into his *ie*.

Jun: returning to Japan temporarily

On a September afternoon in 2011, I sat down with Jun at a café in Temple Bar, one last time before he left Dublin. "It feels like 'indigestion (*shōkafuryō*)." Jun summed up the past year of living in Dublin. Faced with his impending return to Japan, he looked somewhat chagrined at his failure to meet the objectives of his stay in Dublin. In particular, he referred to the disappointment with his inability to acquire work experience and make as many foreign friends as he had wished to. He remarked:

> The experience I gained here in Dublin is invaluable and worth it…But I regret not having interacted with as many people as possible. All of my friends are either Japanese or pro-Japanese foreigners because the meetup nights and Saturday language exchange sessions were my main experience with Ireland…So, next time I want to try out the things I could not accomplish while in Dublin, such as meeting people outside of these Japan-mediated networks and obtaining a job. But in order to make it happen, I should continue to improve my English abilities. One of the many things I have learnt here is that people are not so patient to listen to your broken English. I had thought that what thoughts you wanted to convey was much more important than how you convey them. But I realised that you must have a good level of English skills to get people to listen to you.

In fact, in addition to the Japan-Ireland meetup nights and the Saturday language exchange sessions that he regularly attended, he recently started frequenting another social group called 'New and not so new,' with a view to improving his command of English through communication with people outside of his network of friends. Joining this social group comprising professionals from European backgrounds, unlike the familiar meetup nights, was challenging for him, even though he had already completed his dictionary-based self-learning exercises. As he was aware that he had not exerted the utmost effort to achieve his initial objective, he gradually had to step out of his comfort zone and so had entered a transnational, English-immersion environment.

Whilst addressing his weaknesses in terms of English, Jun never verbalised concerns about his future. Any hint of apprehensiveness or excitement about his return home, which was typically the case with my participants when nearing the end of their stay in Ireland, was not displayed by Jun. In fact, he was planning to stay on the working holiday scheme for one more year, preferably in the U.K., which had been his first choice. He hoped to make the next experience of living abroad more meaningful. The prospect of embarking on a job search in Japan was not yet mentioned. Nor did he seem to have a clear vision for his future beyond the planned move. Rather, he seemed to anticipate challenges that would await him in the next destination.

"But it doesn't mean that I am partial to Western cultures." He added as if to avoid giving me a misleading view of him. "I just like to live abroad and gain experiences that are not available in Japan." He further said:

> I am not a Western-inflected person (*kaigai kabure jya nai*)…I came to Ireland on the premise of one-year time frame and am going home very soon. So I feel I should not be overly influenced by 'their' way (*somatcha ikenai*). Because the Japanese way of communication characterised by politeness towards others is righteous, at least to me…This principle lies at the core of myself. But keeping this principle in mind, I want to broaden my perspective. In some sense, I am making the effort to dismantle myself.

The implication of this remark suggested that the moral code of conduct in which holding back from expressing opinions and emotions in order to maintain a harmonious relationship with others was perceived as uniquely Japanese. In particular, the 3.11 disaster was crucial to a representation of Japanese people and society having attained a higher level of morality and social order than any other country. Drawing on the example of the lack of a rioting at the time of the 3.11 disaster, he became more convinced that orderliness was a value characterising Japanese people. He went on to tell me that this idea was supported by the images of the affected people maintaining social order and showing outward composure at evacuation centres which were disseminated through the mass media as well as the solidarity that was enacted through AJD charity activities. "It was worth coming to find out that my vaguely delineated images of Japanese society and people were correct," said Jun. He, deeply intrigued to learn more about his own culture, articulated his view of Japanese people and society. Referring to *ichioku sōchūryū* – the idea that most of the Japanese are middle class – and to Tenshin Okakura[1] whom he described as the most influential person in his appreciation of Japanese society, he appeared to be fond of discussing what Japanese

[1] Kakuzō Okakura, known by his pen name Tenshin Okakura, is an art critic, museum curator and philosopher who attempted to protect traditional Japanese art against the influences of westernisation and modernisation in Imperial Japan (Kodansha 1983c: 79).

culture was, emphasising the importance of navigating through globalisation by learning about our own country and roots, as well as embracing diverse yet contingent changes brought by globalisation.

Whilst Jun expressed his profound respect for Japanese manners and remarked that Japan was the best place for him, he said that he desired a life-altering experience to the point of dismantling his 'self,' to use his word. This desire was clearly reflected in his plan for another international sojourn wherein he hoped to achieve this. For Jun, staying abroad was what it took to cultivate a new identity for his ultimate goal of self-advancement.

"Oh, but actually, there is one thing I accomplished; it's about the bodhrán (drum). Do you remember it?" Jun cracked a smile. He spoke of the experience of improvised music that he played with young Irishmen. "I wanted to make it happen before I returned to Japan. Then I walked into a pub one night asked the musicians if I could join them. And they said 'yes' straight away." Despite the fact that he had started playing the bodhrán only a short time before, he quickly had learnt the ropes of bodhrán playing and had played ten songs the previous week. A music session with his bodhrán was indeed one of his primary objectives that he related to me in our first interview. He wore a contented look.

To the next destination

The migrants' decision as to whether or not return to Japan can be an integral part of

their migration experiences (Siu 1952: 35). For the vast majority of the people whom I interviewed, the practice of going abroad was exercised in ways that could have penalised their career progression rather than improving their career prospects at home or providing employment opportunities abroad. In a similar vein, their self-realisation was not necessarily linked to an increase in economic capital. But rather, for those who had travelled to Dublin on temporary visas, Dublin served as a space in which to escape from various social pressures, to seek new possibilities in life, as well as to redefine their personal sense of well-being and fulfilment – their *ikigai* – by transforming their roles and identities. For these people, Dublin was thus a social place absorbing their ambitions and allowing for varying degrees of freedom. But, how did their identities reconstructed through their one to several years' experience of living in Dublin influence their life courses and mobility?

The experience of living in Dublin elicits four major patterns of decision-making about their next destinations: there were people who returned to Japan permanently; those who returned to Japan with a view to more international travel; those who remained in Dublin, and finally those who moved to another foreign country. The vast majority of the Japanese youths interviewed (24 out of 35) stayed with their initial plan to return to Japan before their temporary visas expired, albeit many did so reluctantly. Given the premise of the limited time period they were allowed to stay in Dublin, it came as no surprise that their relocation to Dublin was a temporary arrangement.

The decision about their next destination mirrored to some extent where my participants expected their sense of fulfilment and belonging to lie. As discussed in earlier chapters,

it was evident that the participants saw a large part of their Japanese identity as based on morality, Japan's material wealth, as well as on its soft power. It was commonly cited that Japan was more the ultimate source of belonging rather than just a liveable place for almost all the people to whom I spoke. For example Hiro referred to Japan as "the final destination to bury my bones." 'Home' was the place of origin and return for the vast majority of the participants. Indeed, the various experiences that they had in Dublin, particularly during the period of post-3.11 disaster, served to intensify their sense of belonging to a collective Japanese nation. Although Hiro aspired to continue his journeys overseas, he found his sense of fulfilment primarily in being part of his family unit and Japanese society. A similar idea also can be found in the narrative of Yuki, the female working holiday maker who had had the experience of living in London prior to her second working holiday programme in Dublin. She spoke about her next move:

> My former working holiday experience was so much fun. I wanted to stay longer in Europe, which is why I applied for an Irish one. But this time, I am rather willing to go back and start a family with my boyfriend. I feel that there is a place I should return to.

As with almost all of my participants, Yuki discussed the good aspects of Japan such as a high level of safety in terms of public services and infrastructure. The totalising positive view of Japan was developed in contradistinction to the perceived lack of the same amenities in Dublin. It was often case that through the realisation of the gap between their images of the West and the reality of racism that they confronted as well as the perceived lack of Western modernity, Japan became a more desirable place for the

participants. For these people who lacked in-depth everyday interactions with the locals, Dublin remained an unfamiliar space, while simultaneously they developed a sense of contentment at having gained cross-cultural experiences. This in turn legitimatised their final decision to return to Japan as first planned, with a growing recognition that Japan was ultimately the best place for them. Home was therefore seen as a social space that symbolised a sense of belonging, familiarity and affection towards family and friends. Just as Dorothy in the Wizard of Oz who had felt that she had not belonged in her 'home' became appreciative of her family after her adventure, it was only after the journey that Yuki realised how important her family and friends were. She probably would say upon her return home: 'there's no place like home.' At the same time, she told me that she enjoyed her life in Dublin although living on the low wages paid for her waitress job. It was not just because she was keen to learn English and experience a touch of a life overseas but also because she felt 'very comfortable' having no responsibilities while in Dublin. As seen in the case of Hiro, Yuki felt an affinity towards Western countries but eventually opted to return to a social space with which she identified.

A shifting sense of belonging is typical of migrants crossing national borders, even temporary migrants. In their study of New Zealander working holiday makers travelling to Britain, Conradson and Latham (2005) and Wilson *et al*. (2010) illustrate the ways in which a sense of national belonging is triggered and reinforced through experiencing a set of culturally different norms in the destination. In the context in which transnational mobility is deeply integrated into young people's life courses, migration, albeit temporary, operates as 'a rite of passage' through which migrants reconnect themselves

to their ancestral ‘home’ and establish a firm sense of belonging to New Zealand culture and nation. In the same vein, the case of my research demonstrates the development of national identification through migration. Here, it is important to consider the temporal frame of migration experience and resulting identity transformations in terms of structural constraints that limit migrant experience. In an exploration of temporary migrants in Australia – recent graduates and working holiday makers –, Robertson (2014) draws attention to the dimension of time in the lives of migrants. Immigration policies function as a structural barrier, hindering a linear sojourner-permanent resident transition and limiting the exploration of migration experiences. For those who returned to Japan, the transformations of their identities were found to be temporary by way of re-joining mainstream Japanese society. This is also reflected in Kurotani’s (2007) argument about the ways in which Japanese expatriates’ wives fulfil the dual obligations to manage the *uchi* (domestic/Japanese) and *soto* (public/American) spheres while based in the U.S.A.. Their responsibility to maintain spaces, practices and identities associated with the *uchi* sphere, while simultaneously dealing with those with the *soto* sphere, is fulfilled by slipping back into the same lives that they had lived before migration. The individual plays out various roles along the course of his or her life, and develops strategies and identities for adjusting to life. Seen from this view, time frames migration experiences.

Indeed, for the participants who wished to stay overseas, the visa requirements that regulated international travel operated as a structural impediment to their journeys of self-development. There also was a general reluctance to return to Japan. Most of my participants showed a certain degree of hesitation about becoming re-socialised after

their return. Going back to Japan indicated a re-integration into Japanese society in which they would be expected to find jobs and marry. What awaited them was the reality of job hunting or taking up the expected life course in accordance with *ie* ideology as in the case of Hiro. Several participants, however, singled out their families as the source of emotional conflict so they wanted to remain in Dublin. Due to their difficult relationships with their families, they were unlikely to turn. For instance, Sumire explicitly stated that her 'home' was no longer a place that she felt that she belonged. She told me the reasons why she had come to Dublin: "Because I wanted to be free, especially free from my family. I just wanted to be on my own." Sumire's hometown was located in the country side facing the Japan Sea, Toyama. Her home was a Jōdo-shū Buddhist temple and her late mother was from the Gokoku-shingon-shū Buddhist temple with a history going as far back as 1505. Since her mother had passed away when she was 19 years old, and her older sister had married and left the house, Sumire was left in temple with her strict father and grandmother. Her sense of loneliness in the household grew intense particularly after the loss of her mother. Also, for financial reasons, her wish to get into university did not come to fruition. She could not finance her university studies by herself, nor did her father support her in that regard.

Sumire instead went to Tokyo after graduating from a local high school. Although she struggled to get a full-time position without a university degree, she began a new life in Tokyo while working several jobs. She always had conflicted feelings about her family, saying that she felt that she had sacrificed her whole life even after she had gone to Tokyo to work:

> Nobody in my family really cared about me. My father took my help in maintaining the temple for granted. There were his strict rules in the house about how to wash dishes, how to behave etc. He only disciplined me so that I would obey his orders in the house…I had to return home for '*higan.*'[2] For ordinary people, '*bon*'[3] [in mid-August] and New Year's holiday are the seasons to take a holiday, aren't they? But for me, it was the time to work for my family.

A growing frustration about helping with her father's religious duties seemed to symbolise her disappointment and resentment at his failure to provide an environment in which to pursue a more fulfilling life. Her resistance to fulfilling family obligations turned into a powerful language, expressing her desire to be detached from the physical and moral commitment to her family. She told me that there was no reason for her to return home or to Japan. She expressed her desire to remain outside of Japan because she knew that living abroad was a means that allowed not only escape from her family but also let her postpone making a decision about her life. While relating to me that she still did not know what she wanted to do, she eventually decided to return, not to her hometown but to Tokyo where she had spent her adulthood. This was only because she could no longer afford to live in Ireland without a source of income. Considering her age, she also felt that she could not afford any more time away from the pressure to find a regular job in Japan.

As in the case of Sumire, participants who resisted family obligations and lacked a sense of belonging to their families tended to desire an extended period of freedom

[2] *Higan* is a Buddhist memorial service that lasts seven days around the vernal and autumnal equinoxes (Kodansha 1983b: 131).

[3] *Bon* is the Buddhist observance to honour the spirits of ancestors. It takes places in mid-July or mid-August, depending on the area (Kodansha 1983a: 160).

abroad. A large number of participants showed some hesitation in leaving the local life that they had established in Dublin, thus bringing their fleeting freedom to an end. In most cases, as we saw with Sumire, however, their decision about returning to Japan was subject to their financial resources or the sense of guilt that they felt about not fully engaging in either society. Although quite a few of the participants worked as part-timers, their jobs, mostly low-skilled jobs, were not perceived as beneficial to their résumé. Being suspended from Japanese society was seen as inconsistency in their life course, reflecting the assumption of a liner trajectory of social life (Griffiths *et al*. 2013). As their decision to migrate underlined the desire to transform roles and identities, as well as to make a new self, so their decision to end mobility was indicative of their desire to put their life course back on track in line with Japanese mainstream lifestyles.

In addition to this, their sense of alienation from the host society developed together with the lack of confidence in their English proficiency and limited access to the host community. These reasons sufficed for them to legitimate their return to Japan. However, among these participants, there were people like Jun who returned home for temporary resettlement and to work in the hopes of finding an opportunity to travel overseas soon again. For those who hinted at the possibility of another temporary international move, Japan was not yet the place in which to settle down. The question thus arises: what are the differences between those who actually returned to Japan and those who remained in Dublin?

Aoi: staying on in Ireland by renewing the visa

> When I used to travel to Ireland, there always had a definite time frame for my stay. I never confronted a situation where a visa became a matter of the utmost concern that would have direct consequences on where I lived and how I made a living. But now, without stable employment my future outlook remains uncertain.

Aoi, the 36-year-old former systems engineer, came to a crossroads in life as her visa expiry date approached. During the past year, she had been passed from pillar to post between three schools in the wake of the subsequent bankruptcies of the business schools in which she had enrolled. When I first asked her for an interview around late April, she was in the midst of the process of transferring to another business school. With the difficulty of managing the school issue, AJD activities and part-time jobs, she said that she could not afford to meet me for an interview at the time. But later on when I met her in early July, she was planning to undertake the second year of a FETAC[4] course at a new school.

She spoke about her conflicting feelings about whether to return to Japan or remain in Ireland. Indeed, it was only recently that she had managed to obtain a summer job by leveraging her previous career experience. She related to me that she had been unable to find any full-time job despite job hunting for a year, during which she had distributed one hundred résumés. Aside from this, she also undertook a teaching job in place of a teacher at a Japanese Saturday School as well as taking a part-time engineering job.

[4] The Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC) was the state awarding body for further education based on the National Framework of Qualifications that they made. The functions of FETAC are now carried out by Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) established in 2012 (Quality and Qualifications Ireland).

However, due to being busy with AJD activities, she recently had been fired from the engineering job. It was when she had nearly resigned herself to returning to Japan after the completion of the study programme in the mid-July that a full-time job, even though it was only for the summer, came along in the nick of time. “I was extremely fortunate to get a job at the right time, when it is not easy even for the Irish to find full-time employment. But I feel very conflicted because I won’t be able to meet my *okan* (mum) for a little while more.” Her expression was complex. By dint of continuous effort and because of her previous career, she strengthened the possibility of remaining in Ireland.

Simultaneously, Aoi retained a profound fondness for Ireland, describing herself as an ‘Ireland freak.’ As other Japanese people of her age living in Dublin were married and in most cases their relocation to Dublin was not driven by a cultural attachment to the country like Aoi, her single status characterised her own reason for liking Ireland and the individual autonomy it gave her.

> I miss my family and Japanese food…But living in Ireland helps me feel less pressure from society than in Japan, in the sense that people here are open to differing views. So it feels like Ireland offers a place for free expression. In fact, I don’t have a clear idea of what Japanese culture is. I was always told that I was not Japanese enough (*nihonjin pokunai*) while living in Japan. People said as much, perhaps because I was always outspoken and made myself clear so that they thought of me as a self-assertive person. For instance, I often felt that there were barriers to having an open dialogue with Japanese people who had no international experience because their comments often did not progress beyond generalities. But Japanese people living here don’t fear expressing thoughts of their own. I find this level of communication very comfortable.

Aoi also pointed to similarities between the characteristics of Japanese people and that

of Irish in that Irish people particularly in rural areas were as attentive and mindful (*kuuki wo yomu*) as Japanese. Simultaneously, however, she perceived a freer exchange of views as a Western quality and thereby began to see herself becoming less Japanese.

Aoi was very active, considerate yet tough, had a sober sense of responsibility and articulated her ideas. Whilst AJD had been in operation, she had given priority to fulfilling the role of the main organiser leading the group. Having acted from compassion for the people affected by the 3.11 disaster, she had developed a sense of responsibility to not only the Japanese in the homeland but also to all the people involved in keeping the AJD activities running. Her commitment to the AJD, however, had gradually had got out of step with other young group organisers in their mid- to late twenties who had viewed her continuing efforts as somewhat 'assertive' (*ga ga tsuyoi*). As I described in Chapter Five, there was a time when organisers sought a new direction for the group. Her complaint about their waning commitment to the group's activities was linked to a critical view of their somehow self-centred, less responsible behaviour, which she considered as typical of youths, consequently generating friction between them.

Despite her rigid commitment to the AJD activities and her strong sense of affinity with collective Japanese, she nonetheless preferred to remain in Dublin. “Lately everyone encourages me to find an Irishman to marry, but god knows.” She implied that marriage was a common strategy that people used in order to remain overseas. But she seemed more concerned with how to live as an independent woman than with marriage. Pulling out all the stops to continue her studies, she faced an uphill struggle in pursuing a career

change in order to become a qualified tour guide. In fact, there was a slim chance of her receiving the adequate training to become a tour coordinator, but she told me that she was not giving up on her long-held goal of a career shift. Simultaneously, she seemed to have come to terms with the contradiction of her livelihood being reliant on her engineering skills. For her, the worst case scenario was that no employment opportunities might come her way after the summer and it would leave her with no choice but to return to Japan. She hoped that the summer job would lead to extending her visa.

Ayaka: remaining outside Japan

From the very first conversation that I had with Ayaka, she made it explicit that she aspired to live abroad as long as possible. The relationship with her American boyfriend certainly came into the picture when she extended her stay in Dublin; she decided to get a new visa by changing her status from that of working holiday maker to student. However, now that their relationship was over, she felt that there was no reason to remain in Dublin. She was looking at moving to another English-speaking country in Asia to work. The option of another relocation to an English-speaking land for a job was beneficial in various senses: it would create an extended period of time in which to explore new experiences, improve her English skills, and more importantly, she might find a foreign life partner. She often referred to herself as "a love supremacist" (*renai shijōshugi*). As she had long entertained the desire to become a mother, preferably of 'half' children, coming to Dublin was part of realising such dream. The jobs that she had in Japan were ones that she thought would lead to living and working overseas in

the future. She preferred white men because she articulated the idea that Western men seemed to have a proximate level of culture to that of Japanese, whereas Indian and Middle Eastern men, for instance, seemingly discriminated against women for religious reasons. Marrying a Western man and having 'half' children appeared to be what she yearned for the most in her life. She added that while living in Japan, she had felt that marrying at her age had been the norm and her single status had been seen as deviant from the norm. She said that this was one of the reasons for her inability to rest her sense of not belonging in society.

Having said that, Ayaka seemed to be an independent woman. Whilst marriage remained of great concern, she considered on her own future and appeared to have come to re-orient herself towards building her career. She came across the idea of finding job opportunities in Asia through the previous tenant of her flat who was also a Japanese female student in her early thirties and had already moved to Malaysia a few months previously in order to work. Spurred on by the success of getting into full-time employment that that Japanese student had seized, it was during this period that she diligently began studying for the Cambridge English Language Assessment with an eye to attaining a full-time job position in East or Southeast Asia. She soon embarked on job search by corresponding with dispatch companies based in Singapore.

Ayaka went on to tell me that even though she loved Ireland and was satisfied with what she had experienced thus far, she did not wish to continue living precariously doing a waitress job. Waitressing was unlikely to enhance her career, nor did it guarantee financial stability. Taking full advantage of her previous career in the airline

business and service sector, as well as of the experience of living in Dublin, she targeted job applications in these fields. When asked why she chose Singapore and Hong Kong to be her next challenge, she responded outright that going back to Japan was not an option. She further said:

> I don't intend to go back to Japan, because, as I told you before, I have achieved my career goals in Japan…The stress arising from my work worsened my atopic dermatitis while working in Japan...I've been to Hong Kong and some other Asian countries on holiday, but not yet to Singapore though. Asian food suits my taste and in both cities there should be Chinese medicine doctors with specialised expertise in the atopic dermatitis I have suffered from. When I visited Hong Kong, I thought that it had a liveable environment in terms of food, health and safety. As both places are English-speaking regions, I can make use of my English skills.

Ayaka also placed a particular emphasis on the merit of these places' geographical proximity to Japan, stating that her being based in Asia would make it easier to go back to Japan more frequently. Her life once devoid of objectives was now filled with career aspirations. Her desire for career upward mobility from a low-paid worker to a regular full-time employee was indicative of her struggle between wanting to stabilise her life and to pursue self-development. As her life planning was centred on career advancement, she first sought job opportunities in Ireland and elsewhere in Europe. However, having undertaken the jobs of waitress and an au pair, she realised that the probability of a non-E.U. person without an Irish long-term residency visa gaining a full-time job was extremely small, at least in Ireland in a time of prolonged recession. She instead turned to Asia where job opportunities were relatively abundant.

Whilst Ayaka commented that her sense of Japanese national identity was reinforced

through the experience of the 3.11 disaster, she no longer had a feeling of wanting to return to Japan. Her sense of being a misfit in Japanese society stemmed from the experience in which her mother and male friends used to refer her to as a little bit eccentric and less attentive than a woman should be. The opportunity of studying abroad that she took in her high school days, she said, only fed into their view of Ayaka as a deviant person. Her talks often migrated to the difficulty in living in the restrictive Japanese society. She related a memorable episode that took place while working for the Japanese airline company when a European customer, with a slight surprised look, uttered "Everyone looks the same" at seeing the airline ground staff uniformly dressed in compliance with the company regulations. She felt strongly that it epitomised the characteristics of Japanese society wherein social uniformity was prioritised over individuality. She saw it as a Japanese virtue and yet simultaneously as something that would hamper individuality. "Being here allows me to express my individuality," said Ayaka. The implication of this remark was that it was not only Ireland but also foreign spaces in general that made her feel at ease. For her, remaining overseas was her attempt to live a freer life without being constrained by gendered and Japanese ideals.

"I had never thought about going to Asia until I talked to her [the previous tenant who moved to Malaysia]. Life is full of serendipitous surprises and I feel blessed with all the experiences and people I met here who have helped me get to where I am now," said Ayaka. "My feeling is more of excitement than apprehension. I am willing to discover what awaits me in Asia." Despite the inherent uncertainties, let alone finding a place to live in, the idea of moving to Asia was discussed very positively. Though another relocation to a foreign country was as yet unconfirmed, she was excited at the thought

of moving on to the next stage of life.

Megumi: two homes

In early September Megumi and her fiancé Eóin arranged an overnight visit to his home in Navan for me and Ayaka. Navan was the county town of County Meath, lying 30 miles to the northwest of Dublin. An invitation to Eóin's home, a four star award-winning B&B, was an opportunity for a leisurely gathering and to experience some tranquillity before setting off on the next outward journey.

The couple escorted us into the house; the flower-bedecked house was filled with an extravagant collection of antique dinnerware and furniture, together with a dinning space facing the River Boyne. This B&B was Eóin's home and was also his current workplace. He said to me that no job opportunities had come along despite umpteenth attempts to get re-employed, and that being on the dole had been very depressing. Though joining the family business was by no means desirable for him, it seemed to be the only choice to save his pride. "The economy in Ireland sucks." Eóin and Megumi always made a sarcastic joke about their financial hardship in a way that made others smile.

The soon-to-be newlyweds still lived separately; Eóin, working at his family business in Navan, travelled to Megumi's flat in Dublin a few times a week to spend their days off together. "People ask us why we don't live together after all these years. But we will eventually get to live together once married," said Megumi. In light of the fact that

family finances were a primary concern for the couple, cohabitation would have appeared to be a sensible way to save money. Nonetheless, she explained to me that she wanted to cherish her own private time and space before being destined to share a space for the rest of their lives. However, in fact it was rather their intention of relocating to Japan that made them refrain from developing a concrete vision for their future.

Megumi always described Ireland as “a temporary residence" (*karizumai*) with the idea that she would go back to Japan in the future and explicitly told me that she would have no regrets about leaving Ireland after the loss of two precious people – Seán and Marie – in her life. On the occasion of my last meeting with her during my fieldwork, we sat down next to each other in a pub and talked about when and where we would meet again. Even though she wore a slightly weary look after work that night, the dazzling lustre of her engagement ring set with diamonds and her birthstone – blue sapphire – seemed to symbolise her happiness. Sapphire blue was her signature colour. When asked how she felt about marrying him, she responded:

> I’m happy with him of course, but I’m not really happy living here any more because I cannot envisage a bright future in this country. My physically demanding job, although I love it, is damaging my body. Besides, there isn’t much money left for saving after paying as much as 800 Euros in tax every month. What’s the point of working hard only to get a small salary?

Megumi often complained that despite the fact that even a foreigner like herself made a financial contribution through work towards the Irish economy, local people including drug addicts received welfare benefits. During the course of our conversation, she once again spoke of their plan to leave Ireland the following year. Their plan of moving to

Japan was derived partly from the heavy physical workload of her job that had resulted in hospitalisation several times in the past, but largely from the couple's hope that a relocation to Japan would open up employment opportunities for Eóin. When it came to moving to Japan, Eóin expressed enthusiasm about finding a job in Japan. In addition to that he was undertaking a course necessary in order to teach English in case that he would find it useful in Japan, he was learning Japanese online for half an hour every day and practising basic Japanese vocabulary with Megumi. In contrast, Megumi was not concerned about re-employment. She was not sure whether or not her current job was compatible with the qualifications for being a care worker in Japan. However, she was confident that in her native country there would be plenty of career options for her. "But if possible, I just want to be a housewife and have children, letting Eóin alone work," she jokingly said. "Next year?" I asked. She responded:

> Well, I'm telling everyone that it's up to him, but actually, maybe it's me who is hesitant about moving the plan forward...I think that Eóin is ready to make a new start in Japan. I know that he really loves Japan and wants to take on new challenges…But I am still thinking about it because I have built my career here...I am planning on renewing my work permit next February that will be valid for three years. Then, I will consider putting my job on hold for one year. One of my colleagues is now travelling using this system. I think that one year is sufficient for us to figure out if we can make a living in Japan. If we can't, we still have a backup plan [to come back to Ireland]. This is the provisional plan.

She further remarked:

> Everyone asks me why I still stay on after so many things happened to me here. Like I said before, I will go back to Japan for sure. But once I go back, how can I keep in touch with my clients? Technology [emails, Skype etc.] means nothing to them: they

can’t read, they can’t speak. They are the reason I have stayed until now.

Whilst contemplating their future in Japan, she also seemed hesitant about embarking on the course of action to leave Ireland. All the non-Japanese people around her, including Eóin, called her by the abbreviated name ‘Meg.’ Despite her desire to return ‘home,’ she described the social capital accumulated over the years as an intense sense of attachment to ‘Meg.’ “This is a farewell gift for you,” she said and handed me a DVD titled ‘Inside I’m Dancing’ to me. “Some of my clients appear in this film. Because you visited the Cheshire House and met them, I want you to remember me and them.” All the ordeals and joys that she experienced through living a life in Dublin were firmly woven into her life. Seven years after her arrival in Dublin, the decision to return to Japan was not yet made.

Being the Stranger

11 of my participants out of 35 did indeed seek a practical means to remain outside of Japan, and they were all women. Commonalities amongst people who did not return to Japan were that they remained critical of Japanese society or developed a firm sense of being *soto*. Despite the fact that their positive yet vague images of Dublin, and by extension the West, were replaced by the realities of post-migration experiences, their mobility was closely intertwined with an internal criticism of their own culture. Their perceptions of Japan and Dublin were reciprocally, contextually and repetitively constructed. As Befu (2003) claims, the ways in which Japanese abroad see Japan and their current surroundings depends on where they stand. He notes that, for instance,

expatriates tend to employ the rhetoric of *nihonjinron* to legitimate their corporate culture and develop an idealised view of Japan, whereas those who move abroad out of dissatisfaction with Japanese society are prone to remain critical of their homeland (2003: 15-16). For those who remained outside of Japan, it was often the case that Japan continued to be perceived as a restrictive, narrow-minded society in which they felt that they had to live up to social and gendered expectations. As discussed in Chapter Four, quite a few of my participants saw themselves as deviating from the middle-class ideal life course, each describing themselves as being 'a misfit in Japanese society.' This was prevalently cited by female participants. Their desire to lead a freer life was tied into an inability to gain a sense of fulfilment in a job and the constraints stemming from the gendered roles associated with practices of becoming and maintaining *uchi*. Their sense of alienation derived from their failure to live up to the gendered roles and from deviating from the career track was intensified over the course of their years in Dublin.

As seen in Aoi's and Ayaka's narratives, their single status and seemingly independent mind-set continued to give them a sense of being incompatible with what was expected of Japanese women and thereby they aspired to extend their individuality rather than filling this role. Attentiveness, submissiveness and self-effacement were often perceived as the requisite characteristics of Japanese women's subjectivities, which my women felt that they had failed to attain. Wakana, a 27-year-old student similarly did not identify herself with the ideal image of a Japanese woman. She referred to her personality as being similar to that of Europeans, noting that she loved partying and dancing, did not hesitate to show affection in public and always stood up for her beliefs. My women's constraints were therefore intimately entangled with a particular mode of

femininity that assumed women had to behave in certain ways in both the *soto* and *uchi* spheres. For these participants, returning to Japan was tantamount to yielding to the gendered ideals, as well as to submitting to a society where individual choices and wills were seemingly disregarded, ultimately leading to the ceasing of personal development. While engaging in part-time jobs and education, these people gave priority to self-advancement, believing that this could only be achieved by placing themselves in an unbounded foreign space that allowed them to abandon the restraints associated with societal and gendered expectations. They saw their ability to travel to Dublin as important in gaining cultural capital that would lead them to cultivating a unique individuality. As I have discussed in Chapter Four, this propensity of Japanese women to migrate is similar to the conclusions reached by previous studies that depict their resistance to social expectations (Andressen and Kumagai 1996; Kato 2010; Matui 1995; Nagatomo 2015): that is, remaining outside of Japan allows for emancipating women from gender mores. In this regard, these participants were cosmopolitans in the sense that they made themselves mobile by using the cultural capital that they accumulated through their Irish experiences. At the same time, they remained as the Stranger in the places they travelled to.

Indeed, renewing a student visa or switching their visa status from that of a working holiday to a student visa was a practical expedient so as to obtain an extended period of living overseas. Whereas the majority of these people opted to remain in Ireland, two women moved to other destinations; Ayaka moved to Singapore and another participant to Malaysia in order to begin a new career track. Their life planning centred on career advancement, i.e., leaving their work as a waitress or salesperson in Dublin and

resuming work in a full-time job. Reflecting the prolonged recession sweeping across the country, these participants sought job opportunities outside of Ireland. Despite the fact that they acknowledged that another relocation to a foreign country would be temporary, staying overseas was expected to afford them the possibility of enhancing their social position, knowledge and flexibility in transnational mobility.

Such temporary residency and the non-membership orientation of the sojourner characterised the migrant experiences of those who decided to remain overseas. The sojourner as a type of the Stranger continued to be on the move with a cosmopolitan outlook. The underlying similarity between the cosmopolitan and the Stranger lies in their objectivity, since both occupy a unique stance of in-betweenness which allows them to detach themselves from specific and fixed localities, structures and knowledge. Ossewaarde (2007: 374) describes how the cosmopolitan has the ability to maintain distance, like the Stranger, so that the cosmopolitan can exercise "not only physical, but also social, mental and ethical mobility." In his argument, the cosmopolitan's knowledge and objectivity can transcend any group loyalties and structures. The ability to relativise knowledge is an important quality of cultural capital that enables individuals to move and have the capacity to accept strangers (ibid.: 384; see also Marotta 2007: 109). With such an intellectual disposition as that of the "cosmopolitan Stranger," those who remained outside of Japan lingered in the state of strangerhood.

As I mentioned above, the image of Japan as a restrictive society came to be constructed in contradistinction to the conceptualisation of Dublin as a permissive foreign space. Their decision for not returning to Japan derived in part from an emotional attachment

to and their new everyday world in Dublin. As described in the preceding chapters, almost all of the participants had some form of social involvement in the local society, for instance, through their part-time jobs or participating in meetup nights and AJD activities. However, it was clear that very few of them were able to attain a sense of contentment at engaging in local society because they often found themselves within social circles of other Japanese like them or of other foreign nationals. Many of the people whom I met in the field had little interest in and knowledge about Ireland prior to migration. And certainly their idealised images of Ireland were overturned and their national consciousness was reinforced through the experience of living in Dublin. Nevertheless, quite a few of the participants, even though many of whom faced a return home due to visa restrictions, expressed joy at being in Dublin and even described Dublin as their 'second home.'

The reason behind this, I argue, was precisely because they saw Dublin as a foreign space providing a broad frame of freedom for them. For instance, their appreciation of freedom was reflected in the level of attention that they paid to their appearance; Japanese men, as were the cases with Masaki whom I introduced in Chapter Four and other male participants in their twenties, tended to keep their hair long because they were aware that they would not have the freedom to do so once they returned to Japanese society and re-enter the workforce as salarymen. By the same token, many women embraced the freedom of going out without makeup on. This freedom to be less attentive to their image contrasted strikingly with lives that had been carefully monitored by *seken* while in Japan.

To return to Chapter Four, many of the participants including Hiro and Jun led something of a withdrawn life. While embracing the freedom of not engaging in anything particular in Dublin, they also were not confronted by the criticism of being idle youths or *freeters* as they might have in Japan (Cook 2009). Dublin, then, became a desirable place only because it was thought of as a place in which to embrace freedom in terms of dress, hair style, and ultimately, lifestyle. For them, *seken* was interpreted more surveillance by Others than of a source of intimacy. From this perspective, their sense of contentment was embedded in being liminal. In fact, it was not only local people but the participants who saw themselves as outsiders in Irish society. Interestingly, most of them indeed strongly identified with and appreciated being a sojourner who was residing in Dublin temporarily. While living in a liminal state, they had neither legal obligations to fulfil nor societal pressures to face. In short, Dublin became a space that allowed them to stay free from *seken* and their families. It was Jun who best articulated this feeling of living as an outsider: "When I moved here, there was no one who knew my name. I was just a nobody here." This sense of alienation was taken in most cases to be part of a 'new experience' for them because it was something that they had never confronted in Japan and that they in fact enjoyed. Given that their accounts of living in Dublin did not progress beyond the level of the 'recreational mode' of the tourist experience in Cohen's (1979) sense, it was clear that the liminality with which they identified was interwoven into the being of the Stranger.

Whilst the term home carries diverse connotations for different categories of migrants, the implications of 'second home' that some of the participants cited could be understood in more nuanced terms such as familiarity and spatial intimacy. In fact,

many of the participants did not know about Dublin very well nor felt that the locals appreciated the presence of the Stranger like themselves. Whilst developing a sense of alienation, they also developed a sense of home through their everyday lives in Dublin. In this understanding, their sense of 'home' in Dublin encompassed both familiarity and strangeness. For most of the participants, this sense of home was interwoven into their desire to belong neither to a particular locale nor to be bound by legal and moral commitments. They somehow happily identified themselves as outsiders to Irish society. Since they saw their liminal status in a positive light, their lifestyles in an assumed cosmopolitan Dublin were built upon liminality. In short, strangerhood was essential to their sense of being *uchi* (home) and individuality.

The sense of being liminal amongst people who cross national borders is often discussed with reference to transnational identities. In her work on Japanese women living in the U.S.A., Kelsky (2001) describes their ambivalent sense of belonging to both America and Japan. In the process of demythicising Occidental longing, the Japanese virtues that her participants had once criticised now engendered an intense sense of national belonging. Yet, her participants also kept a critical distance from "the insular, exclusive, narrow-minded world of Japanese male corporatism" (2001: 216). Their ambivalent positionality did not render a strong sense of affinity to either Japan or the West; rather their identities were suspended between the West which was no longer "external" and a Japan that was "not internal" (ibid.: 217). Kelsky concludes that such an obscurely framed sense of belonging turned into a diasporic identity within which "Japanese and foreign allegiances could coexist" (ibid.). Migrants who look at an indefinite stay in a foreign country are prone to develop a transnational identity over the

course of their experiences, as described in Maehara's (2010: 964) argument which showed that her participants' families are not only "here" (Ireland) but also "there" (Japan). Just as Megumi developed a local identity through an association with the people whom she met over the course of her life in Dublin, migrants on long-term sojourn came to embody a firm sense of connectivity to two transnational locales. The 23-year-old degree-student Mai related to me that building her everyday life over four years in Dublin contributed to her feeling that Ireland became her 'home' and that there was no place of belonging in Japan except for her family. Mai explicitly told me that she had no desire to return to Japan after completing her bachelor's study programme. For these migrants, homeland typically became a site of proximity and at the same time the site of the "symbolic, of representation, the infinitely renewable source of desire, memory, myth, search, discovery" (Hall 1990: 236). In the diasporic conscious, home is a zone of an origin and return, which can never be "fulfilled nor requited" (ibid.). For them, being embedded in transnational spaces inevitably evoked ambivalent feelings for a home that is near yet far.

Given that these participants expressed a great sense of affinity with Dublin and dual allegiances to home, it is possible to suggest that migrants' feelings of membership to groups gradually altered over the course of living in Dublin. The transformation of their subjective view from being the sojourner to the Stranger in Simmel's (1950) sense indicates the transformative process of the identification with being a migrant. Ironically, as they identified with multiple social spaces and people in those spaces, their ambivalent feelings and positionalities came to be intensified. For instance, Megumi's articulation of Dublin as *karizumai* indicates that despite her transnational identity,

Japan continued to be the place to return and that Dublin continued to be the space for articulating her being liminal. To return to Simmel's concept of the Stranger, they are the representation of marginal ethnic groups: they are near to and yet culturally distant from the dominant group. Through living in Dublin, it was not just that they became the Stranger in the eyes of the locals, but they themselves came to identify with being liminal in Dublin.

The mobility of Japanese youths

I have pointed out the temporal aspect of the transformation of identities that interrelated with structural constraints. Here, I want to explore the scope for the interplay between migration experience and structure. A life course points to the flexible nature of circumstance and the multiplicity of roles that arise over the course of life. Consequently, how was migration practised within my participants' life courses? What variables related to and regulated migration practices? As described earlier, the majority of my participants adhered to the premise that their relocation to Dublin would end upon the expiration of their temporary visa. Consistency in a life course shaped predominantly by career stability remained of importance for my male participants. This was particularly true for those who had lived as salarymen prior to their travel to Dublin. Hiro's example was a case in point. Whilst somewhat resenting the pressure to conform to the ideology of the *ie*, Hiro appeared rather content to follow a socially prescribed life course. Even though the experiences in Dublin had shaped a new sense of belonging and they embodied the desire to linger in a tempo-spatial freedom, the premise of a sojourn in Dublin rarely changed. Similarly, Masaki enjoyed the sheer freedom and yet

spoke of a sense of guilt about being idle in Dublin. On the last occasion I met him at meetup, he told me that though he was not sure what he would do in Japan, he should return home and get himself ready to resume a stable life. Yet, he did not appear overly concerned about his new start but rather looked excited to return to where he really belonged. He made it explicit that he would bring the 'summer holiday' to an end, and he went back to Japan in September 2011. This attitude towards work and family generally resonated with other male participants. Commenting that they were aware of the time limit on their freedom, they also yearned to re-enter mainstream Japanese society and get on with their lives. For them, all the life changes pertaining to travel had to be temporary so that their résumés would not be tainted by a long interruption but be overwritten with the marketable values of an international experience. Not only did these men continue to define their life orientation primarily through their economic engagement in Japanese society, they also did not desire to be independent from the salaryman role. Thus, they eventually resigned themselves to re-entering the world of adulthood.

This suggests that their life courses were not significantly altered throughout the experience of living abroad; once they became socialised as adult men, an embedded dominant masculinity remained influential in men's life courses. Although many of older male participants sought a fleeting solace in a foreign realm, the experience that they gained in Dublin had negligible effects on re-enacting their life orientation, even if they felt conflicted. They held onto the middle-class ideal of a Japanese male life course, ascribing to the idea that the stability of this life course was integral to being an adult man and becoming a future breadwinner. Despite the contemporary reflexive modernity

wherein risk and freedom endow individuals with more flexible lifestyle choices, being exposed to an array of life choices, as Mathews (2003) advocates, does not always indicate that Japanese men celebrate the freedom to shape their lives. Their migration experiences illuminate persistent ideas about Japanese middle-class ideas of masculinity. Japanese men's life orientation that is essentially and persistently anchored in their economic contribution to the household and society reflects the limited possibilities of transforming identities through migration.

Interestingly, in contrast to those who formerly had spent a period of adulthood as salarymen, recent graduates strove to mobilise cultural capital in order to build their futures. The 23-year-old working holiday maker Tomohiro altered his three-year plan of living abroad to master English. His initial plan of applying for another working holiday programme after living in Dublin was replaced by the plan of doing a master's degree programme, preferably in the U.K.. He told me that he was returning to Japan first in order to seek a way to finance his studies. Apparently, he was not yet interested in finding employment. A resistance to yielding to a regular life course was echoed by Jun and other younger male participants in their early twenties. In short, those who did not resign themselves to social roles celebrated freedom at the risk of social security or downward mobility (cf. Korpela 2014: 40).

Yet, this does not suggest that these men, even though most of them were as yet unable to picture themselves in the future clearly, intended to drift for more than a few years without a full-time job. They did not deny the possibility of a future settling down to a white-collar job and envisaged it as one of multiple options. Indeed, despite the fact that

the younger male participants had a higher level of flexibility to navigate the discourse of adulthood, all of my male participants regardless of the differences in their ages maintained that Japanese men should fulfil their social responsibility as the primary financial provider in the household and thereby become a responsible adult man.

As I have discussed, moving to Dublin was a practical strategy to escape from or procrastinate in stabilising social roles. Despite the changing patterns of employment and lifestyle that have led to the fragmentation of life courses as implied in Arnett's (2000) concept of emerging adulthood (see also du Bois-Reymond 1998; Kloep and Hendry 2011), they shared the view that stabilising one's life with adult roles was crucial at some stage in life. This explicitly signifies underlying assumptions and expectations about adulthood dependent on social roles. This contradictory intersection of mobility and life stage resonates with the claim made by Amit (2010; 2011) who argues that the appreciation of an extended sojourn abroad amongst young migrants precisely mirrors the embodiment of a fixed set of assumptions about adulthood. The idea that adulthood is a period in which to attain and stabilise social roles regarding marriage, family, job and residence, is similarly shared by his participants. Hence, it is considered that mobility or journey resists being part of the "immobile and fixed" construction of adulthood (Amit 2011: 86; cf. Clarke 2005: 318-319). A temporary hiatus that my participants took in the process of re-socialisation also parallels Ungruhe's (2010) description of young Ghanaian males who appreciate a temporary freedom in a migration destination before being fully re-integrated into family structures. That individuals experience an increase in a sense of autonomy and freedom with distance from 'home' underlines the argument that my participants' escapism under

the guise of migration conversely informs their unchanged views of adulthood and masculinity. Given that these enduring ideas fundamentally frame the expected life course of a Japanese man, the idea that Japanese men are invariably the social agents who anchor and dominate the socio-economic-political base of Japanese society is integral to understanding Japanese men's life choices. As I have mentioned in the Introduction, it is not my intention to make theoretical generalisations with my limited data. However, I recognise from the data that I collected that there was a general indication that this authoritative and dominant orientation inherent in Japanese men's agency rendered them less mobile as subjects than Japanese women.

In contrast to older male participants, younger male participants and female participants in general tended to allow themselves to stay in the liminal foreign space longer. Without the stability of adult roles that would ensure one's space of belonging in society, they saw themselves as marginal in Japanese society. This sense of marginalisation persisted in their post-migration lives. Compared to Japanese men, the life courses of Japanese women were susceptible to the experiences that they underwent in Dublin, wherein in most cases relationships with a boyfriend whom they had met while in Dublin played a major part in deciding whether or not to return to Japan. In short, their lives began to revolve around relationships with a partner during the course of their stay in Dublin. In view of the fact that it was only female participants who extended their visas, it might be suggested that mobility is an inherent characteristic of the lives of Japanese women. As in the case of Ayaka, Hiromi too made a decision as to whether or not to remain in Dublin based on her relationship with her Irish boyfriend. Anticipating settling down with him in the near future with her 37 years of age in mind, she related to

me that she would not mind where they ended up as long as they were together. Indeed, about half of those who extended their stay in Dublin (six out of eleven) had a boyfriend at the time of extending their visas, which facilitated entrusting their lives to a male partner. From these examples, it is evident that women were more receptive to the contingency of life events that involved various forms of mobility so that the contingency often led them into becoming more international through a longer stay overseas.

It is an interesting fact that although most of my female participants aspired to a life free of playing the expected roles pertaining to marriage, marriage was not completely ruled out. In the same way as male participants embodied rather fixed ideas about adulthood, my female participants internalised the idea that getting married and having children were what was expected of Japanese women, as we saw with the narratives presented in Chapter Four. Aspirations for upward mobility and a stable life through marriage was evidently part of their future plans, whether it would be in Ireland or Japan. Their desire for marriage indeed worked hand-in-hand with an awareness of the prospect that the longer they stayed in a foreign country, the more difficult it was to find a decent job after their return to Japan. If they were unlikely to get married, they would have to find a way to support themselves. In this regard, it came as no surprise that those who led a single life were concerned about their careers and that career opportunities were sought not only in Japan but stretched to foreign countries.

I concur with Lebra's claim that a woman's marginalised status engenders a high level of freedom and flexibility in their life courses (Lebra 1984: 304; cf. Iwao 1993).

Women's ability to transcend this marginality is, then, also a privilege. As suggested in Chapter Four, women's latent flexibility accounts for the unevenness of the ratio of Japanese men and women living abroad. I argue that it was this innate marginality that my female participants resorted to in order to negotiate their well-being abroad. This women's attitude resonates with Kawashima's (2010) argument that underlines the persistent significance of gendered expectations. In her exploration of the life trajectories of Japanese working holiday makers, Kawashima argues that the social norms of marriage and permanent work continue to frame their life courses even after they return to Japan. Whereas her male participants become concerned with settling down to a full-time job and becoming future breadwinners, her women's primary concern is marriage. She argues that it is precisely women's marginality in the Japanese employment structure that directs women to move abroad and seek marriage as a way of self-realisation. In a similar vein, what I find ironic is that while identifying strongly with being marginal, my female participants felt that travelling abroad was the most practical and yet, possibly the only affordable means of negotiating a personal sense of well-being. Certainly a displacement from the web of social relationships freed them from temporal constraints. And indeed, their Irish experience was conducive to developing the idea that it would open up various possibilities for their future. It is with the consciousness of being *soto* that a transnational move further pushed them towards *soto* (cf. Matsui 1995). Therefore, women, in particular, were prone to continue to be marginal.

Conclusion

This chapter explored the ways in which the participants navigated their individual desires, the middle-class ideals of womanhood and manhood, as well as the discourse of adulthood in transforming their identities. The ways in which my participants saw Japan and Dublin were intricately interrelated with their life orientations. Whether Japan came to be conceived of as a place of constraints, desires or as a proud civilisation, it was imagined in differing ways: the image of their homeland was neither static nor monolithic. Indeed, connectivity to Japan was articulated in varying ways. And this related to differing *ikigai* and trajectories to the next destination. What the narratives in this chapter reveal is that, for some participants, the sense of alienation that they might have enjoyed gave way to the desire to attain a firm sense of belonging to Japanese social establishments. It was not only structural constraints regarding immigration policies but also the future prospects for family and jobs that arguably affected levels of transnational engagement.

As discussed, my male participants courageously embarked on journeys to deviate from the life that they had been expected to live, while simultaneously fearing staying outside of the mainstream for too long. Masaki's words "the holiday must end someday," well summarised the sense of being in an extraordinary place and implied that men's transnational mobility should be temporary. Faced with the persistent economic unrest in Japan, they felt that they should adhere to the premise that they were to return home in a year or so, while remaining hesitant about moving back into the workplace. In contrast to the participants in their early twenties, their freedom existed within this ambiguous time and was conditioned as temporary until the time they would become re-socialised.

The salaryman masculinity represented various constraints an adult might confront and the boredom of life based on stability (Williams and Hall 2002: 45). It was clear that those who had been socialised as salaryman were bound by the social pressure to be responsible breadwinners and able workers. Male participants' narratives reflected the tendency that the salaryman norm remained a social criterion by which they measured their lives and to which they were significantly chained. In the face of a wide range of life courses, the socialisation process that these men experienced in Japan rendered them less mobile social agents who had to retreat into a world of a constrained adulthood. This suggests a migrant's transnational mobility is affected by a particular life stage.

For those female participants who remained outside Japan, their yearning for psychological freedom was to be realised in an apparently cosmopolitan foreign space. In this sense, they began to totalise a particular model of womanhood into an overarching perception of Japanese society and they imagined a dichotomy between a blinkered Japanese society and a freer Irish one. A traditional middle-class model of gendered ideals was perceived as undermining the choices that one should have in fashioning the self. For them, this was seen as tantamount to losing their individuality. This in turn led them to appreciate a foreign space in which to enjoy freedom and explore new cultural opportunities without many commitments.

When we look at the lives of my participants, it was evident that Japanese women were as imbued with gendered expectations as Japanese men. However, whilst Japanese men

have come to represent stability of the nation-state and to be seen as socially superior subjects, my research showed that Japanese men were equally or, I would suggest, more beleaguered and constrained by familial and work pressures than women in contemporary Japan. Whilst unmarried women have the privilege of being *soto*, men were prone to be resigned to the confines of the expectations imposed by various social establishments. Clearly, it was an indication that they succumbed to the usual expectations for Japanese men. However in most cases, even if my participants had desired to carve out their lives in opposition to idealised social expectations and believed that the proliferation of cultural capital would be achieved by escaping social ideals, they always lived within the structures of Japanese society even while living in Dublin; the middle-class discourses of salaryman and housewife were embodied in such a way that the life courses of Japanese men and women continued to be mediated by such ideals. This shows that despite their attempt to escape social roles and to craft new identities through migration, they continued to be chained to patriarchal norms, but to varying degrees. In short, they never stopped being Japanese men or Japanese women. It could therefore be argued that their migration practices were mediated through gendered ideals and their life stages, which consequently influenced the extent to which the participants were able to transform their identities.

Chapter Eight: Conclusion

The reproduction of dominant Japanese ideologies and identities

This thesis has explored the various processes of identification amongst Japanese youths living in Dublin. What can we learn from the ethnographic narratives of Japanese migrants in Dublin, recounted in this thesis? A desire for self-realisation amongst my participants was brought about through the migratory flows to cosmopolitan Dublin. These journeys, albeit temporary, were thought to result in the accumulation of cultural capital, and the remaking of roles and identities. As Chapter Three discussed, the desire for freedom and the search for a sense of individuality were closely intertwined with a yearning for a new sense of self, new roles and identities and (Griffiths and Maile 2014; Hoey 2005; Kato 2010; Korpela 2014; Osbaldiston 2012). Through migration, the central role of gaining distinction and the reconfiguration of various boundaries were evident, and impacted on how their identities constantly were transformed. The many ways in which identity was manifested in my case studies reveal that identity is not pre-given but a construct, and that its negotiation and expression are tied to the ways in which ethnicity, nationality, gender, class and life course are experienced and understood. In this way my data supports the literature on migration which claims that migration offers an arena in which class distinctions are re-enacted (Benson 2014; Oliver and O'Reilly 2010; Torresan 2007), as is nationality (Fujita 2009; Wilson *et al*. 2010), ethnicity (Fujita 2009) or gender (Kawashima 2012; Kelsky 2001). In line with these works, my research clearly demonstrates that migration when practised at a certain life stage also influenced my interlocutors' subjectivity.

My ethnographic data shows that my participants' lives in Dublin brought about heterogeneous processes of identification; that is, their establishing new positionality through a Japanese national and ethnic identity, as well as middle-class, gendered ideals, and at times a collective feeling of being Japanese migrants, was precipitated by migration experiences. We have seen in Chapter Four that my participants had resisted the middle-class ideals relating to women's and men's lifestyles in designing their life courses. Paradoxically, however, their migration experiences served to reinforce the dominant, middle-class values held in Japan, as evidently discussed in Chapter Seven. The seemingly contradictory forces of being global subjects and forging a sense of national belonging highlight the ongoing importance of the self-Other boundaries.

Chapter Six demonstrates that both class and habitus as illuminated in transnational space, were of particular importance for an understanding of this boundary-marking processes amongst my participants. It is often the case that whilst lifestyle migrants appreciate being liminal in their new destinations, they come to face new concerns while being Strangers. Since no one can be independent of social structures, my participants not only came to identify a new context within which to position themselves, but also found themselves entangled in a web of Japanese social relationships from which they had hoped to escape. Similarly, Vannini and Taggart (2014: 198) describe the ways in which Canadian off-gridders lead a relatively self-sufficient lifestyle within "a dialectic of strategically chosen constellations of connection and separation." Escapism and a perceived separation from the past self are central to lifestyle migration (Griffiths and Maile 2014; Korpela 2014). Importantly,

however, the ways in which my participants saw the world, and led their lives, also remained mediated through their past class positions and habitus. My ethnographic data clearly demonstrates the importance of class and habitus which further characterised the participants' migration experiences. For example, Hiro's social circles of friends were built on his reading of the habitus of others, which resulted in the reproduction of his class position and habitus. Although this reproductive nature of habitus did not occur in every case, as shown in the narratives of Yukiko and Kaori, my participants tended to draw on their past class and habitus in the processes of identification. This suggests that once habitus has been formed, it tends to persist even after migration. Ironically, this also indicates that although the participants desired to transform their identities, they continued to be bound by their own previous habitus. In short, they could not totally escape from Japanese modes of being. The case studies in my research therefore support other dominant research on the migration experience that emphasises the reproduction of migrants' embodied structures (Benson 2012; Salazar 2014; Oliver and O'Reilly 2010).

However, despite embarking on the pursuit of a different and desirable future through migration, my participants found themselves constantly negotiating amongst their own varying desires. Their narratives in Chapter Seven explicitly reveal that the ways in which they chose their next destination were significantly tied to the middle-class ideals of a Japanese life course. The importance of these ideals was particularly salient amongst those who returned to the lives that they had lived before migration. For instance, Masaki whom I introduced in Chapter Four and Seven said that he desired to end his life as a migrant after one year, in order to make his career look less inconsistent.

In contradiction to the increased flexibility in life courses that younger Japanese generations experience, as described by Nagatomo (2015), the narratives of my participants reveal that they embodied the norms of stability as well as the middle-class ideals of a Japanese life course and that this continued to mediate their hopes for the future. Moreover, in light of visa restrictions, the life courses of the majority of the participants were strategically planned in anticipation of re-joining Japanese mainstream society. Therefore, as Amit (2010; 2011) argues poignantly, this temporary migratory experience runs counter to an analytical perspective that sees migration as potentially transformative. The transformation of roles and identities, and the self liberation experienced through these journeys to Dublin, as well as the fact of transnational mobility itself, as described in this thesis, were limited; lifestyle choices, supposedly opened up by migration, were susceptible to pre-existing structural constrains.

The reconfiguration of embedded values entailed in the migration experience is also depicted in Chapter Five. It shows that the transformations of my participants' identities went hand-in-hand with a redefinition of living as Japanese in Dublin. Migration can also contribute to a reconstruction of dominant ideologies. The participants' experiences of living in Dublin significantly contributed to my interviewees reconstructing, or rather forging, a coherent sense of being Japanese. Their migration experiences lent impetus to re-evaluating ideas of Japaneseness and Otherness, which resulted in identifying themselves with a coherent Japanese identity. In fact, they tended to emphasise their national identity above their ethnic, gender and class identity. Indeed, these intersecting identities were subsumed into a national identity and ultimately led to a critical reflection on what it meant to be Japanese. They thus became enmeshed in the process

of identifying themselves with the Japanese collectivity through their migration experiences. The participants nevertheless embodied, or rather reconfigured, ideas about what constituted a Japanese person, as a result of migration. My participants' profiles were heterogeneous particularly if we take into account gender and regional backgrounds. However, what became evident was that, as discussed in Chapter Three, the idea that a Japanese person gives preference to their role within the social, that is, the role that they play in the *soto* sphere, rather than on the individual self (Clammer 2001; Hendry 1992; McVeigh 1997), was not just held to be true, but became a dominant discourse.

Sugimoto (1997) asks to what extent *nihonjinron* discourse is embraced by Japanese people. This is an important question. What needs to be considered is not whether or not the discourse is a fabricated 'myth' but, as Yoshino (1992) points out, how it has impacted the lives of contemporary Japanese. As we have seen in this thesis, particular aspects of *nihonjinron* have become so entrenched in the Japanese consciousness that they can be embodied by people regardless of class, region, gender and age. The idea of ethnic homogeneity, for instance, was not cited by my participants at all, but instead, what was prominent was that they laid particular stress upon the concept of self-sacrifice for the importance of group unity, as an essential attribute of the Japanese. The ideals about how to behave in relationships, which were reified as modesty, harmony and cooperation, kept emerging in the post-migration phase. This notion came to be formed in contradistinction to an assumed Western individualism, an openness and moral laxity, as well a belief in a generalised backwardness in other Asians (Mouer and Sugimoto 1986: 378). The discourse of *nihonjinron* is not the only type of nationalism

that developed in post-war Japan. However, this cultural nationalism has become so pervasive that it became an important part of the narratives of a Japanese national identity.

My participants experienced a growing awareness of their Japanese national and ethnic identity as a result of being exposed to Otherness. Being subjected to various forms of difference in their everyday lives made them aware of and led them to assume commonalities amongst themselves. By sharing this awareness with those seen to share the same collective attributes, they found themselves negotiating with reference to Japanese ideals in various social settings. As I have discussed in Chapter Five and Six, a sense of national and ethnic belonging was mediated by interactions with Western and Asian Others in the post-migration context, but more significantly, by the 3.11 disaster. As Chapter Five explored, despite their simultaneous embeddedness in social relationships in both Japan and Dublin, the 3.11 event introduced a period that precipitated processes of redefining the participants' expected responsibilities and roles as national Japanese subjects. The idea of a structural conformity characterised as groupism was seen as essential to their sense of being a Japanese person, whether or not they perceived it favourably. Therefore, there was a strong inclination among them to consistently imagine 'the Japanese' as a collective entity.

Yet, being a Japanese person carried different meanings for different people. Nevertheless, their narratives revealed that Japanese ideals came to be situated as a common frame of reference within which they interpreted, internalised and exhibited their national identity according to their needs. For many of the participants, such

dominant ideals were something that they had resisted prior to their move to Dublin. Simultaneously, there were some contexts in which they preferred being labelled as Japanese, and they attempted to live up to 'Japanese' ideals and openly demonstrated them as a form of national pride. The period of post-3.11 disaster that was a case in point. As shown in Chapter Five, this identification was most heightened by both the Japanese themselves and the Others amongst whom they lived. The participants made themselves visible to Others as a coherent, homogenous national group in the public sphere during this period of charitable activities in order to avoid being seen as just generic East Asians in Irish society. This was a time when groupism was extolled as a Japanese virtue they could identify with. However, this was a short-lived solidarity. Given that AJD volunteers demonstrated differing levels of moral commitment to the group and had differing priority in their lives in Dublin, the idea of groupism expressed in the *nihonjinron* discourse impacted only a part of their behaviour. It was evident that my participants resorted to various modes of projecting Japaneseness at given points in their life course, at times when they found it beneficial. Of course, their identity was always subject to context (Bauman 1996; Nagel 1994).

In their narratives the dichotomy between what was Japaneseness and what was foreign was inescapable. Mouer and Sugimoto (1986: 14) point out that homogeneous representations of Japanese society and people lead to a blinkered vision of the Japanese. However, I came to understand that a certain amount of generalisation is integral to the construction of a collective identity. As a number of scholars argue (Lebra 2004: 265-269; McVeigh 1997: 81; Yoshino 1992), the unitary representation of the Japanese provides a national framework, which also relies on the existence of external Others. At

the same time diversity remains inherent within the Japanese themselves. In this sense, Dublin became the site in which both their sense of individuality and Japaneseness were developed and national, ethnic and middle-class consciousness became intricately intertwined with a reconstruction of Japanese ideals in contradistinction to nationalist ideals. Despite their appreciation of living in a foreign social environment that allowed them to fulfil the longing for a transformation in their identities and roles might be possible, they continued to shape and be shaped by the dominant discourses of Japaneseness.

Whilst migration is often considered to be a phenomenon that is capable of upsetting territorial forms of identity, my research demonstrates that the idea of Japaneseness as a bounded entity was actually reinforced through migration. This idea continued to act as a powerful framework for understanding the lives of Japanese migrants in Dublin. In part, the practice of migration helped informed an essentialised form of identity and illuminated the continuing relative importance of the nation-state. As Glick Schiller (2009: 29) claims, migration indeed plays an important part in realising the significance of the boundaries of the nation-state. Migrants come to identify with nation-states, since migration processes are subject to the social structures of nation-states that continue to be a primary regulator for the control of national borders (Glick Schiller et al. 1995: 59). Despite the fact that individualisation in what has been called reflexive modernity can lead to the emancipation of individuals from their conventional identities, the boundaries expressed in the *nihonjinron* discourses that I encountered in my research, were both desirable and were reconstructed. This formed a part of the reproduction of social relations that took place across global space.

In this way, my data evidently adds to the discussion of the contradictory orientations inherent in the migration process; whilst temporary migration led to the creation of new identities through gaining new roles, the potential role of migration as life-changing was also significantly limited by embedded values and norms, as well as legal and social constraints. And rather, migration became a means to solidify pre-existing values and social structures. In the current literature relating to Japanese temporary migrants, the transformative and reconstructive potential of migration is little acknowledged. Previous studies of the Japanese abroad (Andressen and Kumagai 1996; Habu 2000; Ichimoto 2004; Matsui 1995) provide accounts of the underlying causes for migration amongst younger generation. However, they fail to acknowledge the experiences that follow migration and the resulting consequences for identity formation. Nevertheless, Fujita (2009)'s work offers a valuable example of the transformative aspect of identity through migration, although it remains incomplete in some respects. In line with these previous studies my research also looks to the major migration flows of Japanese people towards Western destinations, especially in the European context. Cities such as London, Paris and Düsseldorf, where a large number of Japanese reside, have been the focus of much scholarly attention. In contrast, my focus on Dublin offers a different perspective. The small number of Japanese people in Ireland does not constitute a distinct ethnic group nor are there any salient Japanese representations in the country. Not surprisingly, no scholarly attention has been given to the study of Japanese migration in the Irish context. My research therefore fills an important gap. Conducted in a minor Western city, it reveals much about the processes of becoming 'Japanese' which parallels the case studies discussed in Fujita's work, but with some differences.

Lifestyle migration amongst Japanese youths

The economic disparity amongst migrants to Dublin, enabled those in a privileged position to be mobile and participate in different lifestyles while abroad. In the case of my participants, they occupied an advantageous position in mainstream Japanese society and thus had access to resources that helped them engage in a life overseas. Migration was taken as one of the options available to them in order to enhance their cultural capital, negotiate their well-being and redress what they saw as shortcomings in their projected life courses in Japan. Chapter Four explored this. Mai and Otone had been motivated to move to Dublin in order to earn a degree. Escaping from the realities of life as was the case in Nodoka's, Hiro's and Masaki's narratives, was another cause of migration to Dublin. Somewhat differently, Ayaka, Megumi and Aoi had wanted to explore new opportunities through a life abroad. Therefore, it was not only their desire to seek out other opportunities, but also a sense of stagnation and isolation, arising from Japanese social norms, such as those in the workplace, family or society, that had led to a yearning for a freer, and a better quality of life on their return to Japan.

To return to Cohen's (1979) typology of the modern tourist experience that I discussed in Chapter Three, the objective of my participants' stay in Dublin fell between the recreational mode and experimental mode. Those who had travelled to Dublin only to look for superficial pleasures in order to unwind from their social responsibilities, stayed moored to their native society and the Irish experience took on the characteristics of recreation; on the other hand, there were people who felt alienated from their families

or Japanese society, and thereby they strove to find a new sense of belonging to place with which they could identify. They desired a life changing experience. To varying degrees, although the participants had differing experiences in Dublin, depending on the purpose of their journey to Dublin, all the activities they engaged in during their time there were aimed at acquiring cultural capital. They each endeavoured to enhance their cultural capital on their own terms. Indeed, the value of the experiences that the participants gained was not necessarily linked to tangible achievements in Dublin. Using English, socialising with people of various ethnic backgrounds, engaging in low-skilled jobs and even travelling in and around Dublin were all seen as important resources on which to build their cultural capital.

Also, the cultural experiences that they had during this form of travel were valued as part of the knowledge necessary in order to manifest their cosmopolitanism. MacCannell (1976: 34) states "leisure is constructed from cultural experiences," and tourism as offering opportunities for experience has become an important part of global human mobility. A correlation between tourism and transnational mobility is revealed in Seo's (1992: 34) observation that even study abroad takes on the characteristic of "a modified vacation" for young Japanese women. There is no doubt that the travel of Japanese people with whom I worked became a remedy for their pervasive sense of stagnation. Seeking a rewarding experience to help their spiritual growth, they resorted to temporary migration. Several scholars have commented on this blurring of the boundary between tourism and migration (Amit 2007; Benson and O'Reilly 2009; Nagatomo 2015; O'Reilly 2007; Robertson 2014; Rodman 2007; Wilson *et al*. 2010). With increasingly less clear-cut binaries between "student/worker, tourist/worker,

skilled/unskilled, legal/illegal, alien/citizen and temporary/permanent" (Robertson 2014: 1930), the traveller, the sojourner and the permanent migrant are all part of the diversifying flows of mobility. In this regard, the category of lifestyle migration both encompasses and links those who do not fit well within conventional categories of migration or tourism.

My ethnographic data provides an example of a wider trend of mobility amongst people from relatively well-off backgrounds that is often discussed within the field of lifestyle migration studies. My participants' mobility, which cannot be completely classed as skilled migration nor as economic migration, has the characteristics of both traditional approaches to migration and tourism, and also feeds into long term travel as a form of self-exploration that takes place in a foreign society. There were those who felt that they had failed to live up to middle-class ideals, and others who desired to carve out a unique lifestyle within a different social context. In modernity where "individuals have become ever more free of structure" (Beck, Giddens and Lash 1994: 176), there is a growing need to act on personal reflexivity in order to shape individual life paths and identities. The pursuit of a better quality of life, therefore, becomes a responsibility entrusted to individuals (Bauman 2000; Giddens 1991). In addition, the contemporary era is supposedly characterised by the demise of a clear opposition between us and the Other; mobilities can no longer be defined in terms of the sedentary-nomad dichotomy (Clarke 2005; Jensen 2013; Tanaka 2013). Moreover, strangerhood is an identity that is constructed and reconstructed in a constant process of negotiation (Bauman 1997: 25; Ossewaarde 2007: 385). We appear to live in a time of the omnipresence of strangerhood. Within this context, my participants attempted to pursue their own way of

life beyond Japanese social relationships, in part by transforming themselves into the 'Strangers.' As Harman (1988: 43-44) suggests, strangerhood is no longer an attribute of outsider-ness but "a way of life." Given the temporary nature of my participants' stay in Dublin, their appreciation of the ability to migrate and of becoming a Stranger, reflected a lifestyle choice.

However, migration, particularly through non-mainstream degree-programmes, was problematised by my participants themselves. Given the importance given to a collective life shaped through various institutions of power, it is assumed that migration leads people to have a less rooted, and thus less authentic, relationship with their original society. Therefore, a yearning for self-development through migration is seen as problematic, in the sense that stable, collective identities are considered central to the sense of being a member of any modern nation-state. This notion was closely related to a perceived inability to exercise individual autonomy and the pressures to conform to the roles that the participants were expected to play in Japan. Lebra (1976: 158) notes that in the discourse of *nihonjinron*, individuality can exist only in contradistinction to social integration, and therefore "the autonomy of an individual is assured and protected only in social isolation, only when a social moratorium is declared." In parallel to this, my participants felt that individuality, that is, the sense of autonomy in their role playing, was not only unattainable within Japanese social relationships, but had to be achieved outside Japanese society. In this sense, the pursuit of self-realisation in Dublin represented a way to express a temporary sense of individuality.

The people whom I encountered in Dublin were on a journey, searching for a fulfilling

life and exploring their individuality. This is evident from the ways in which the participants navigated through their various conflicting discourses and their individual desires, which vividly demonstrate the diverse ways in which Japanese migrants enact differing ideas of *ikigai* and their varied ways of practising mobility. As explored in Chapter Seven, the participants' differing perceptions of Japan and Dublin intersected with their migration trajectories. Hiro and Yuki, for example, saw Japan as the place to return and settle down. In contrast, Aoi and Ayaka said that they felt comfortable with a freer life in a cosmopolitan Dublin. The experience of living in Dublin added an extra layer to, or placed a differing emphasis on, their identities and roles. Their mobility was therefore fundamentally interlinked to a process of transforming roles and identities; travel was a process which gave distinction and status to the participants, and their journeys symbolised their pursuit of an *ikigai*. This dynamic construction of identity enacted through migration demonstrated the obvious yet important fact that no two individuals have the same journey; that is, there is no uniform way of living as a migrant or a Japanese person.

It is within this context that we need to reconsider Japanese contemporary migration. Some of my participants' desire to transcend the constraints of social relationships apparently contradict the *nihonjinron* assumption that a Japanese person's self-fulfilment lies within the contentment of fulfilling their social roles and being part of mainstream Japanese society. Thus, just as *becoming* a migrant is at times seen as problematic in the sense that people fail to be social actors who contribute to the state, *staying* as a migrant is stigmatising as they are not seen as adequately Japanese. In contrast to societies in which temporary youth migration is the norm (Conradson and

Latham 2005; Wilson *et al*. 2010; Ungruhe 2010), migration, let alone long-term migration, for working-aged Japanese middle-class is nonetheless a form of deviance.

From this perspective, it is beneficial to pay more attention to the transient global movement of lifestyle migrants that intersects with a temporary state of transformation. The temporal dimensions of migration have been largely overlooked in prior analyses of the practices of lifestyle migrants. Moreover, the role of gender, as played out in the lives of migrants, has not been sufficiently explored in this literature. Given the increasingly common practice of going abroad, examining the interplay between a temporary state of transformation and individual-based modes of migration can enrich knowledge of the complex processes of migration and offer a greater understanding of lifestyle migration. Although this thesis demonstrates only a partial reality, of those engaged in temporary migration to Dublin, my research nevertheless provides an important glimpse into migration processes through the lives of otherwise invisible young, temporary migrants. Migration, and its role in processes of reconstructing identities, offers a way of understanding the social relations between the participants and Japanese society, as well their relation to a broader transnational. As shown in Chapter Three, against the norm of lifestyle stability prevalent in Japan, growing numbers of Japanese youths are expected to embark on a journey abroad as a result of recent government-led policies in relation to student mobility programmes. However, returning working holiday makers seem to experience great difficulties in fitting into a typical Japanese work culture (Kawashima 2010: 279-280), and acquiring the cultural qualities of *soto* seems unlikely to result in positive prospects regarding job positions and career stability in any straightforward fashion. With this in mind, investigating how

dynamic reconstructions of identities through migration can impact an individual's life course on returning to Japanese society is potentially an important task for future researchers.

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Appendix: Glossary

amae	dependency
bon	the Buddhist observance to honour the spirits of ancestors
Burakumin	the descendants of the outcast communities of the Tokugawa era
chantoshita kuni	respectful country
chōki taizaisha	long-term residents
Datsu-A-Ron	'leaving Asia' theory
eijyūsha	permanent residents
ga ga tsuyoi	assertive
ganbarisugirunomo damenanndesuyo	it is probably not gonna happen if you work hard for it
geta	Japanese-style clogs
giri	obligation
haken	temporary workers
hatabi	flag day

higan	a Buddhist memorial service that lasts seven days around the vernal and autumnal equinoxes
hinomaru	the national flag
honne	one's real feelings
hurusato/kokyō	home, homeland
ichininmae	adult
ichioku sōchūryū	the idea that all Japanese are middle-class
ie	household
ikigai	something to live for
immin	migrant
ijū	migration
jibun	self
jibun sagashi sedai	the generation of self-searching
jinshu	race
kaigai kabure jya nai	I am not a Western-inflected person
karizumai	a temporary residence
keigo	honorific words
keiyaku-shain	full-time workers on fixed contracts
kitaku-nanmin	stranded commuters

kokumin	national subjects
kokusaika	internationalisation
konkatsu	marriage hunting
kuuki wo yomu	to read between the lines
kyabakura	one type of night-time entertainment service
makeinu	loser dog
mama-san tarento	mother personalities
mindo	the cultural standard
minzokushugi	ethnic nationalism
nihao	hello in Mandarin
nihonjin pokunai	you don't act like a Japanese person
nihonjinron	theories about the Japanese
Nikkei-jin	people of Japanese descent
ninjō	human feelings
noshi paper	Japanese gift wrapping paper
okan	a colloquial expression used in western Japan for 'mother'
omote	front
renai shijōshugi	a love supremacist

ryūgaku	studying abroad
seishin immin	spiritual migrants
seiyō	the West
seken	world, society, public
sengyō shufu	full-time housewives
shakai fukki no youna	returning to society
shinjinrui	New Men
shinmin	imperial subjects
shitsurei	rude, disrespectable
shōkafuryō	indigestion
shu-i	environment, surroundings, neighbourhood
shufu	housewives
shūsyoku-katsudou	job hunting
shūsyoku-rōnin	graduates walking into unemployment or continuing job hunting after their graduation
sokoku	mother country
somatcha ikenai	I shouldn't be overly influenced
soto	outside
tatemae	public behaviour
uchi	inside, family, home
uchimuki	inward-looking

udon	Japanese wheat noodle
ura	back
wa wo taisetsu ni suru	value harmony, keep conformity
yokatta ne	well done
yūgaku	studying pleasure